LaShawn A. v. Williams An Assessment of the District of Columbia's Progress as of September 30, 2003 in Meeting the Implementation and Outcome Benchmarks for Child Welfare Reform

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LaShawn A. v. Williams

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Introduction

This is one of three reports prepared by the Court Monitor in January 2004 to assess the progress of the District of Columbia in meeting the outcome and implementation benchmarks established in the Court-ordered <u>LaShawn A. v. Williams</u> Implementation Plan. This report covers progress on outcomes through June 30, 2003 and on Implementation strategies through September 30, 2003.

The <u>LaShawn</u> Implementation Plan was approved on May 15, 2003 by U.S. District Court Judge Thomas F. Hogan. The Implementation Plan sets the outcomes to be met and the strategies that the District government will implement to achieve compliance with the child welfare reforms required under the <u>LaShawn A. v. Williams</u> Modified Final Order. The Implementation Plan covers outcomes and activities through December 31, 2006 and sets interim performance benchmarks to assess improvements at six month intervals. The goal of the Implementation Plan is to provide a roadmap for developing and sustaining high quality child welfare practice in the District of Columbia, leading to improved results for children and families and to the eventual end of Federal Court oversight of the District of Columbia's child welfare system.

The Implementation Plan sets many benchmarks for action to be taken and outcomes to be achieved by September 30, 2003. As Court Monitor, the Center for the Study of Social Policy is responsible for independently assessing the District's progress in these many areas. With respect to outcomes, the monitoring involves verification of administrative data provided by the Agency monthly as well as independent data collection through periodic case record reviews and other quantitative and qualitative review methodologies (see Appendix A on Case Record Review Methodology). With regard to implementation strategies, the monitoring involves a review of Agency policy and procedure, extensive consultation with the leadership and staff of the District's Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA), independent verification and assessment

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¹ See <u>An Assessment of the Functioning of the Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline of the District of Columbia Child and Family Services Agency</u> and <u>LaShawn A. v. Williams: Qualitative Review: Process, Results, and Recommendations</u>, Center for the Study of Social Policy, January 20, 2004.

of actions the Agency has committed to undertake, and other independent information gathering which enables the Monitor to make judgments about the Agency's activities and progress. These include, but are not limited to, participation in Agency and city wide child fatality reviews, participation in Agency workgroups on selected reform strategies, observation at Agency staffing, participation in city-wide multi-agency and multi-system forums related to reform (such as the Child Welfare Leadership Team and the Healthy Families/Thriving Communities Collaborative Council), consultation with key stakeholders, observation at Family Court hearings and follow-up on individual issues that the public brings to the attention of the Monitor.

The report that follows provides a considerable amount of detailed information about individual activities and benchmarks that offer a window on the functioning of the District's child welfare system between June and September 2003. This information is valuable for the Court, the plaintiffs in the <u>LaShawn</u> litigation, key stakeholders, the Mayor, the District Council, the Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA) and the public. It is also true, however, that almost as soon as it is written it is out of date. This is good news because the District's child welfare system is overall on a positive path for change and there are areas where improvements are occurring monthly. There are other areas where rapid progress is not as evident. The purpose of this "point in time" look is to identify both the progress and successes as well as the areas where reform is more difficult, slower to demonstrate results, stalled or moving in the wrong direction and therefore requiring different or additional strategies. It is also important to step back from the individual outcomes and actions and to view the status of the District's child welfare reform as a whole – a sometimes difficult task given the large number of individual areas in which progress is expected to occur and is measured.

The report that follows is in two parts: Part One provides summary information on the key functions of the child welfare system and the children and families it serves. Part One also provides the Monitor's overall assessment of the Agency's progress to date: what is working well, what is improving, and those areas that need more or different attention and better results.

Part Two of the report provides detailed information about the Agency's progress in meeting the defined performance benchmarks for both outcomes and implementation activities. The outcome measurements are against the June 30, 2003 targets.² The Implementation measures are against performance benchmarks through September 30, 2003. The reason for the different time frames is that it takes time to objectively measure progress on outcomes. In order to determine if the performance achieves the outcomes for children and families expected by June 30, 2003, the Monitor needed to review a sample of case records as of the end of July 2003, when it was reasonably expected that written records would reflect case status as of the end of June. The process of conducting a review of a random sample of case records and recording and analyzing that information takes several months. In addition, for the first time, the Monitor incorporated a limited assessment of the quality of case practice and used an intensive interviewing methodology called the Quality Service Review to look more in-depth at the provision of services to children and families.³

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² To measure achievement of June 30, 2003 benchmarks, data from case records in July 2003 is used.

³ See <u>LaShawn A. v. Williams: Qualitative Review: Process, Results, and Recommendations</u>.

PART ONE: OVERALL PROGRESS AS OF SEPTEMBER 30, 2003

I. PROGRESS IN KEY SUBSTANTIVE AREAS

This section of the report is organized around the key service delivery and infrastructure functions of the District's child welfare system. In each section, some basic information is provided, followed by the Monitor's assessment of What's Working Well and What's Not Working Well.

Intake and Investigations Α.

The first and foremost responsibility of any child welfare system is to ensure the safety of children. In the District of Columbia, responsibility for receiving reports of alleged abuse or neglect, conducting timely and high quality investigations and making appropriate assessments and decisions based on the safety and risk of harm to children rests with the Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA). In accordance with District law, investigations of abuse and severe neglect may be carried out in cooperation with the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD).

Figure 1 shows the number of calls to the Hotline received between October 2002 and September 30, 2003. The number of abuse and neglect calls ranges from a low of 366 to a high of 541. In September 2003, CFSA received 398 calls of alleged abuse or neglect. Approximately 40% of investigations involve allegations of physical or sexual abuse and the remainder are allegations of child neglect. Under District law, investigations are to be initiated with 24 hours and completed within 30 days.⁴ Approximately 23% of investigations in September resulted in supported cases of abuse or neglect. This percentage also fluctuates monthly and is comparable to national data (see Figure 2). In September 2003, 317 investigations were completed.

Figure 1: Calls to the CFSA Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline (Reports of Child Maltreatment (CPS) and Information & Referral (I&R)) (October 2002 – September 30, 2003) 800 700 2.04 600 500

■1 & R ■ CPS 400 300 541 463 162 151 437 421 200 100 Oct-02 Nov-02 Dec-02 Jan-03 Feb-03 Mar-03 Apr-03 May-03 Jun-03 Jul-03 Aug-03 Sep-03 Month (October 2002 - September 2003)

Source: CFSA administrative data.

⁴The LaShawn Modified Final Order requires the initiation of child protection investigations within 48 hours of a report of suspected abuse or neglect.

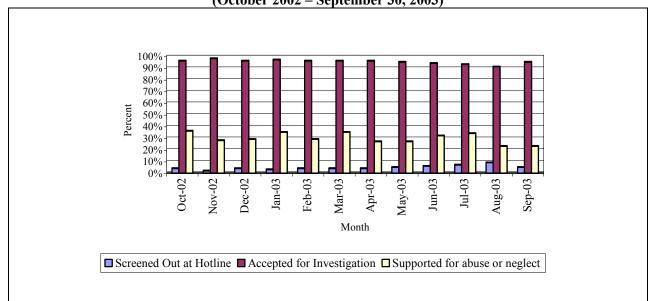


Figure 2: Disposition of Hotline Reports of Abuse or Neglect* (October 2002 – September 30, 2003)

Source: CFSA administrative data.

What's Working Well

- The District now operates a unitary hotline which accepts calls and initiates investigations of alleged abuse or neglect 24 hours a day, seven days a week.
- There have been steady improvements in staffing of the Hotline, although as of the end of September, the Hotline was not fully staffed for all shifts.
- The Agency has developed revised policy for the Hotline that clarifies many areas that previously resulted in confusion about practice. Extensive training on this policy is planned for January and February 2004.
- When a call to the Hotline is entered in the District's FACES information system, there is an automatic 100% check of prior history, which provides important information for the investigation and the worker's assessment of risk of harm to children.
- There is prompt transfer of information from the Hotline to investigative workers. The information is transferred electronically and hand carried to an Investigations supervisor when immediate action is required.

^{*} Does not include information and referral calls. Investigations are required to be completed within a 30-day period. All calls to the Hotline during a particular month may or may not be completed by the end of that calendar month.

- CFSA has established an Emergency Assessment Program with several of the Healthy Families/Thriving Communities Collaboratives, which seeks to quickly identify and engage relatives and community supports in addressing family problems that bring children to the attention of the child welfare system.
- In September, CFSA appointed an acting administrator for Intake and Investigations with the goal of correcting problems with consistent management and oversight of this critical area. Recruitment for a permanent administrator is underway.

What's Not Working Well

- There is no consistently available capacity on the Hotline to assist non-English speaking callers.
- There is not yet an ability to tape record calls to the Hotline and consistently review the calls to ensure that every call is properly handled.
- Although the Agency has taken recent steps to increase staffing for all shifts at the Hotline, additional staff may still be needed.
- Although the Agency consistently monitors the timely investigation of alleged abuse and neglect, not all cases are initiated within the time frames required by law and policy and once again there is a growing backlog of cases that are not completed within the required 30 days. As of September 30, 2003, CFSA administrative data shows that three-quarters (78%) of investigations were complete within 60 days, with 39% complete within the required 30 days. The remaining 22% took more than 60 days to complete. Although better than several years ago, this completion rate is not as good as it was a year ago and does not meet the performance benchmark established in the Implementation Plan. As of the end of September, there remained a backlog of 354 investigations that were open more than 30 days and incomplete.
- While caseloads have continued to come down in the Investigations Unit, they remain too high for worker to efficiently and competently respond to children and families when abuse or neglect is alleged. The <u>LaShawn</u> Order requires that by June 30, 2004, investigation caseloads should be no more than 12 cases per worker. The caseload benchmark for June 2003 was a maximum of 16 cases and by December 2003, the caseload benchmark was 14 cases per worker. As of November 27, 2003, there were 15 workers out of a total 56 workers who carried more than the June 30 benchmark of no more than 16 cases. Two of these workers were carrying 30 or more cases.

B. Services to Families and Children in Their Own Homes

As of September 30, 2003, CFSA administrative data show that there are almost 2000 families with children living at home who are receiving services because of supported abuse or neglect. The total number of children in these families approaches 4500. For these families, CFSA has made a determination that the child(ren) can remain safely in the home with the provision of Agency oversight and services. Many, but not all, of these cases are also receiving services from a Collaborative or other public or private social service agency. Some but not all of these cases have been brought to the attention of the Family Court and also receive Court oversight. These cases are primarily assigned to social workers at CFSA with requirements to engage the family in the development of a case plan, provide case management and other services to the child and family in accordance with that plan, link the child and family to other community service providers and visit the child and family at least monthly and in some cases, twice monthly to monitor progress and assess safety and risk.

What's Working Well

- The Child and Family Services Agency continues to contract with the Healthy Families/Thriving Communities Collaboratives, which are located in seven neighborhoods in the District with high concentrations of families who enter the child welfare system. The Collaboratives offer a wide range of concrete services and supports to families served by the child welfare system and to families in the community where children are at risk of abuse or neglect.
- As the District moves to reform its mental health system, there are hopeful signs that there is improving capacity for mental health services for children and families. This is an essential need.
- CFSA has decided to distribute caseloads on a geographic basis so that workers are better able to know the assets and resources of the neighborhoods in which the children and families coming to the attention of the child welfare system live. Preliminary work for geographic case assignment has included mapping data on where children and families in the system live and deciding on boundaries for geographic case assignment. New cases will be assigned according to geographic boundaries beginning January 5, 2004.
- CFSA has developed and implemented an on-call program so that families can access social workers after hours and on weekends to deal with crisis situations or for needed support.
- June benchmarks for services to children and families were met, with evidence that children and families are increasingly receiving services to meet educational, mental health, physical health and other needs, although coordination of these services needs improvement. Additionally, the Agency has implemented a number of strategies to review cases to ensure a comprehensive array of services are available to children and families.

• Caseloads in the ongoing units continue to decrease. In October 2003, there were 21 out of 203 case carrying workers whose caseloads did not meet the performance benchmark of having no more than 27 cases. The Agency has made significant progress in bringing down caseloads. The current caseload levels are in stark comparison to October 2002 when 25 workers carried between 30 and 39 cases, 26 workers carried between 40 and 49 cases and 13 workers carried 50 or more cases.

What's Not Working Well

- Although there continues to be improvement in the number and percentage of cases with current case plans, as of the end of September 2003, CFSA administrative data show that only 45% of in-home services cases have a current case plan. For one-fifth of cases, there is no case plan in the FACES information system. Although this is not acceptable, it represents continuing improvement from the beginning of 2003, when less than one-third of cases had current case plans.⁵
- Evidence from the Quality Service Review and from key stakeholders including the Family Court points to continuing unmet needs for families and children related to substance abuse treatment, treatment for sexual abuse, mental health services and housing assistance. CFSA has been working to complete a comprehensive needs assessment by the end of December 2003 that should provide more information about the kinds of service needed by children and families and the level of need for new resource development.

C. Children In Foster Care: Achieving Stability, Permanency and Well-Being

As of September 30, 2003, there were 2946 children in the District's custody in foster care. This includes 2133 children in which CFSA workers were primary case managers and 813 children where primary case management is provided by social workers in private agencies under contract with District government. Of the 2946 children, 81% of them were living in foster homes with either kin or non-kin caregivers. The remaining children were living in independent living, residential treatment and congregate care group homes (see Table 1).

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⁵ CFSA continues to make improvements in its timely completion of case plans. CFSA administrative data for December 2003 shows that 59% of the in-home cases and 79% of foster children have current case plans.

	Case Type		CFSA Management	Private Case Management	Total	Percent
Foster	Foster					
Care	Homes	Kinship	672	19	691	23%
		Non-				
		Kinship	943	755	1698	58%
		Subtotal	1615	774	2389	81%
	Group	Independent				
	Settings	Living	116	6	122	4%
		Residential Treatment	108	13	121	4%
		Group Homes/ Congregate Care	263	19	282	10%
		Subtotal	487	38	525	18%
	Other		32	0	32	1%
		TOTAL**	2133	813	2946*	100%

^{*}There is a discrepancy of three children between the total foster care caseload as of September 30, 2003, the selected demographics for children in foster care (refer to p. 9, Table 2), and the total caseload for permanency goals for children in foster care as of September 30, 2003 (refer to p. 10, Table 3). This discrepancy is because data runs in FACES are produced at different times. Case counts are constantly changing as workers open cases, close cases and update information about permanency goals, etc. Since different reports are run at different times, a slight difference in the numbers is expected.

^{**}There are also 120 children in third-party non-kinship foster care. These are un-licensed placements that historically were made by the Court for which no foster care payments are made. CFSA has been working diligently to reduce this population, which was at a high of 316 in October, 2002, and has been steadily declining each month. Source: CFSA, FACES

Table 2 shows the demographics of children in foster care as of September 30, 2003.

Table 2: Selected Demographics for Children in Foster Care as of September 30, 200			
Number	Percent		
1428 1517	48% 52%		
	Number 1428		

Age	Number	Percent
1.77		1.70/
<1 Year	41	1.5%
1-5 Years	506	17%
6-12 Years	1147	39%
13-15 Years	535	18%
16-17 Years	319	11%
18-21 Years	397	13.5%
TOTAL	2945*	100%

Ward of Origin	Number	Percent
337 1.1	100	607
Ward 1	189	6%
Ward 2	120	4%
Ward 3	15	1%
Ward 4	183	6%
Ward 5	334	11%
Ward 6	307	10%
Ward 7	345	12%
Ward 8	464	16%
Unknown	988	34%
TOTAL	2945*	100%

^{*}There is a discrepancy between the selected demographics for children in foster care, the total foster care caseload as of September 30, 2003 (refer to p. 8, Table 1), and the total caseload for permanency goals for children in foster care as of September 30, 2003 (refer to p. 10, Table 3). This discrepancy is because data runs in FACES are produced at different times. Case counts are constantly changing as workers open cases, close cases and update information about permanency goals, etc. Since different reports are run at different times, a slight difference in the numbers is expected.

Source: CFSA, FACES

It is important to note that less than 20% of children in foster care are age 6 years or younger and over 40% of children are age 13 years and older. This age distribution has implications for strategic planning and resource allocation throughout the District.

Table 3 shows the Permanency Planning Goals for Children in Foster Care as of September 30, 2003

Table 3: Permanency Goals for Children in Foster Care as of September 30, 2003			
Permanency Goal	Number of Children	Percent	
Adoption	1089	37%	
Reunification	478	16%	
Independence	346	12%	
Guardianship	453	15%	
Long Term Foster Care*	57	2%	
Planned Permanency Living Arrangement	290	10%	
Other	9	.3%	
No Goal	227	8%	
TOTAL	2949**	100%***	

^{*}Long Term Foster Care is not an acceptable permanency goal under the Adoptions and Safe Families Act (ASFA). The number of children with this goal has been declining (from 224 in April 2002 to 57 as of September 30, 2003). **Includes Family Stabilization, Legal Custody, and Relative Placement.

Source: CFSA, FACES

As Table 3 illustrates, more than one third (37%) of the children in foster care have a permanency goal of adoption. In reviewing the foster care sample, the Monitor found that approximately 81% of children have been in care 15 months or more. The Adoption and Safe Families Act requires there be legal action to free children for adoption when they have been in care 15 of the last 22 months

^{***}There is a discrepancy between the permanency goals for children in foster care as of September 30, 2003, the foster care caseload as of September 30, 2003, the total caseload for permanency goals for children in foster care as of September 30, 2003 (refer to p. 8, Table 1), and the selected demographics for children in foster care (refer to p. 9, Table 2). This discrepancy is because data runs in FACES are produced at different times. Case counts are constantly changing as workers open cases, close cases and update information about permanency goals. Since different reports are run at different times, a slight difference in the numbers is expected.

What's Working Well

- CFSA continues to make and sustain progress on the reduction of children under the age of 12 who are living in group settings for more than 30 days. Although they still rely heavily on St. Ann's Infant and Maternity Home for emergency placement of children, the number of children under age 12 who remained more than 30 days in a congregate care setting was 33 as of the end of September. This represents a dramatic reduction from the 95 children under 12 in group settings in October 2002. Further, there is evidence that more children are going directly to family settings through the Agency's program for emergency foster homes, which are available to receive children
- The Agency has developed and implemented an on-call program that allows families and foster and adoptive parents to access CFSA social workers 24 hours a day, seven days a week when there is a crisis or a family needs urgent support.
- The Agency has embarked on an ambitious plan to more fully engage families and other community resources in the case planning process. With assistance from the Annie E. Casey Foundation's *Family to Family* initiative and the Center for the Study of Social Policy, CFSA is working in collaboration with many community stakeholders to use facilitated family team meetings, which would require convening a family meeting prior to placing a child in foster care or changing his/her placement or immediately after any emergency placement is made. The use of family team meetings and the Agency's commitment to other coordinated case staffing to plan with and for children and families are key components of a new focus on improving the quality of case practice.
- There have been significant enhancements in the resources within the Agency to assist workers in identifying and addressing needs of children and families. The Agency added a Pediatrician, two nurses and resource specialists in the areas of mental health, domestic violence, substance abuse, education and housing.
- The Qualitative Services Review conducted by the Court Monitor with participation of CFSA managers and staff found considerable strengths in the system including knowledgeable social workers whom families knew and valued and a cadre of traditional and therapeutic foster parents who are capable and committed caregivers.
- With the implementation of the new Family Court in the District of Columbia, there is improved collaboration at every level. These include CFSA's co-location of the Office of Corporation Counsel attorneys with CFSA social workers; the hiring of additional lawyers and assigning them by judicial officer; reassignment of cases in the Supreme Court to Judicial Officers in the Family Court; the Family Court's efforts to improve scheduling of court hearings to make more efficient use of worker time; and continued joint training and IT progress on sharing data between the CFSA and the Court regarding scheduling, adoption progress and Court orders.

- CFSA developed a new RFP covering out-of-home care, which seeks to clarify responsibilities for case management and service delivery, incorporates the <u>LaShawn</u> requirements on social work visitation and caseloads, and which reflects the Agency's commitment to continue to reduce the numbers of children inappropriately placed in congregate care settings. The RFP and the contracts that will be issued from it are the first step in moving toward a performance-based contracting system.
- There is a renewed emphasis on meeting the needs of teens and young adults in the child welfare system. CFSA created a new Office of Youth Development and has been directing efforts to improve permanency for teens and increase their connections and supports to the community before they reach age 21. This has been coupled with a pilot program at the Family Court in which one of the Magistrate Judges is holding Benchmark Hearings with older youth in foster care in order to help youth make plans for their future and receive the full range of services necessary for their success.
- One of the strengths of the District's child welfare system is the continuing effort to place children with relatives and provide supports to relative caregivers. In 2001, the District enacted legislation, which provides for the payment of a Guardianship subsidy as financial support for relative caregivers who are able to permanently care for their kin in cases where return home or adoption is not feasible. Initially, there was very limited use of the guardianship subsidy but in the last year 115 guardianship subsidies were completed.
- Social worker visitation to children in foster care continues to improve. The Quality Service Reviews and the case record review both found visitation post June 30, 2003 to be above the levels found in the Agency's administrative reports and above levels required by the June 30, 2003 Implementation Plan benchmark.

What's Not Working Well

- Despite improvements in adoption efforts, there remain over one third of the children in foster care with a permanency goal of adoption. Efforts to identify adoptive resources for children who need them and accelerate the legal and other work to finalize more adoptions is not yet sufficient. The use of flexible funds to facilitate adoptive resources, which had been available this past year, no longer appears to be accessible to workers.
- Over the past year and a half, the Agency has not been successful in working with the Metropolitan Police Department to create the ability to immediately screen criminal history of potential relative caregivers. This is necessary in order to determine if children can be safely placed with relatives. Not being able to do this means that many children must go to a temporary non-relative placement and remain there until the clearances are obtained. The District has been on the verge of solving this problem for over a year but has not. It must be resolved.

D. Staffing and Caseload

Table 4 below shows the average caseload for investigations workers, and the number of workers whose caseload exceeds the performance benchmark for September 30, 2003.

Type of Work	MFO Standard	9/30/03 Benchmark	Average Caseload on 10/17/03*	# of Workers with Caseload Exceeding 9/30/03 Benchmark
Investigations	No more than 12 investigations	No more than 16 investigations	12** (range is from 1 – 39 cases)	15
Case Carrying Workers (In-Home Services and Foster Care)	Foster Care No more than 12 children with special needs or 20 for all other children	No more than 27 cases	19	17 (no worker carrying over 29 cases)
Adoptions	No more than 12 children or 15 children involving independent adoption	No more than 27 children	20 cases	4 (no worker carrying over 29 cases)
Supervisors	No more than six workers, including case aides, or five case workers	50% of supervisors will be responsible for no more than six workers, including case aides, or five case workers	3 supervisors have 6 workers each; 1 unit without a supervisor has 6 workers although one worker is not carrying cases.	4 of 37 supervisory units (11%) exceed the standards***

^{*}Data for investigations workers are from the week ending November 27, 2003.

Source: CFSA administrative data from October 17, 2003 for case carrying workers, adoption workers and supervisors.

^{**}The average number of cases carried in the Investigations Unit is not a useful measure as the spread of cases is quite large with 12 workers carrying fewer than 8 cases and 15 workers carrying more than 16 cases. Two workers were carrying 30 or more cases.

^{***}Six training units are not included in this review.

What's Working Well

- The Agency has made laudable progress on increasing their social work staff and reducing caseloads for workers. This is an accomplishment that has been elusive for almost a decade. Substantially reducing caseloads sets the stage for major improvements in all areas of case practice over the next year. As of the end of September 2003, the average caseload was just under 20 cases per case-carrying social worker. Using data from the week ending October 17, 2003, no worker had more than 29 cases and only 21 workers exceeded the Implementation Plan benchmark of no more than 27 cases by September 30, 2003. Those workers had caseloads of 28 and 29 cases.
- In order to improve staffing, the CFSA hired a competent Human Resource Administrator and Recruitment/Retention Coordinator and implemented a range of steps over the past nine months to improve recruitment and retain social workers. These strategies are beginning to make a difference.

What's Not Working Well

As previously noted, caseloads in Investigations remain too high. The tremendous
increase in the backlog of investigations along with the caseload findings suggest that
more staff are needed to manage number of children and families referred to CFSA
due to concerns of abuse and/or neglect.

E. <u>Training</u>

What's Working Well

- New workers are assigned to training units for a period of approximately two months. During that time, they receive a combination of classroom and on-the-job training and are assigned only a few cases. The use of these training units seems to be a good way to introduce new workers to the demands of the job and to make sure that by the time they receive full caseloads, they understand the expectations and requirements of the work and have developed the skills needed to competently fulfill their job duties.
- CFSA has developed a well thought out and ambitious training plan for this year, which focuses on improving the practice skills of workers in engaging families, assessing child and family needs, developing and carrying out high quality case plans and achieving permanency for children.

What's Not Working Well

• The Monitor is not certain that the Training Unit has sufficient staff or resources to carry out its plans, and curricula is still under development in several key areas. One trainer position will be announced shortly and recruitment for a second trainer is underway.

F. <u>Licensing of Foster Homes, Kinship Homes and Group Care Facilities</u>

What's Working Well

- During this last year, CFSA created and staffed a new Office of Licensing and Monitoring which has the capacity to both license and monitor the licensing status of foster homes, group homes and independent living facilities.
- For the first time in the District's history, all group homes and independent living facilities in which children are placed have a current license. The implementation and enforcement of licensing standards should lead to upgrading the resources and increasing the quality of care that children receive in those settings. This was a large undertaking and is a significant and long overdue accomplishment.
- New policy has been developed for the emergency licensing of kinship placements. When implemented, fewer children will have to spend time in emergency placements in situations where there is a willing and appropriate relative caregiver.

What's Not Working Well

• Despite progress, there remain far too many foster homes where children are placed which lack a current and valid license (56% of foster homes in July had a valid and current license). These include both homes in the District of Columbia and homes in surrounding jurisdictions, especially Maryland. There has been much work and consistent efforts, especially with the Maryland homes, to clearly identify which homes are licensed and which are not and the reasons for lack of licensure. There also is much more consistent attention to meeting the requirements of the Interstate Compact for the Protection of Children (ICPC) and promptly sharing information with Maryland when children are placed there on an emergency basis.

G. Contracting

What's Working Well

- CFSA has taken good steps toward the development of a performance-based system
 for contracts. An enormous amount of work went into developing RFPs for
 Congregate and Family-Based Care that reflect the mission and values of the Agency
 and more clearly define the roles, responsibilities and expectations for performance.
 Over the next several months, the Agency will negotiate new contracts for all
 congregate care settings and family-based foster care.
- Contracts for the Healthy Families/Thriving Communities Collaboratives provide community sites for visitation for children with their parents and siblings. So far, this new resource is being underutilized, but hopefully that will improve in the next period.

What's Not Working Well

• For six months in 2003 (June to November), CFSA had a Contract Administrator who subsequently left the Agency. A new Contract Administrator was hired in January 2004. The lack of consistent leadership in the Contract Office has resulted in continuing evidence that the contract operations need improvement in order to ensure the timely processing of contracts and consistent monitoring of contract expectations. The Monitor is not yet confident that the Contract Office has sufficient staff with proper qualifications to timely negotiate and monitor all contracts.

H. <u>Information Systems</u>

What's Working Well

- The Monitor is more confident in the data being produced by FACES. In most instances, the administrative data provided by CFSA closely paralleled the data obtained by the Monitor in the independent case record review described in Part Two of this report.
- The improvement in the ability of the FACES information system to provide data useful for overall management and individual case planning is significant and ongoing. This reflects a dramatic improvement over the last year and is an area in which the progress is ongoing and continual.
- CFSA reached agreement with the Monitor on a set of monthly monitoring reports to allow internal and external monitoring of performance expectations and CFSA has been providing monthly data in accordance with that agreement.
- There has been continuing progress toward ensuring more prompt and accurate data entry. This is reinforced through management attention to data and use of data for supervisory and management oversight.
- There have been consistent efforts to make sure that private agencies under contract with CFSA have access to FACES and understand the importance of entering data timely and accurately into FACES.
- There has been considerable work and progress with the Family Court on efforts to electronically share data.
- Managers and supervisors are now using FACES data and reports to manage their staff and to monitor compliance with key indicators such as case plans and visitation.

What's Not Working Well

Although much has been accomplished and at a pace that seemed inconceivable a year ago, improving the system's ability to collect and use information is still a work in progress. Problems include:

- Lack of important historical data on many cases in the FACES case record.
- Technological problems, which include difficulty navigating some parts of the system; system and equipment breakdowns; and problems that private agencies and remote users experience in accessing information and entering data. CFSA does have a help desk that seeks to resolve issues in a timely way.
- The Monitor's case record review continues to observe poor quality of documentation in case records about important aspects of children's cases and lives. Frequently, important historical data is not in the case record or there is delayed or inconsistent documentation of key events.
- Absence of a face sheet which provides important history and current status for anyone looking at a child's case.

II. SUMMARY OF PERFORMANCE ON IMPLEMENTATION PLAN BENCHMARKS

Table 5 below summarizes the status of implementation strategies to be complete by September 30, 2003. Table 6 summarizes progress on outcome achievement by July 31, 2003.

	Implementation Strategy	Performance Benchmark as of September 30, 2003	Status
	Implementation Strategy	reflormance benchmark as of September 30, 2003	Status
rot	ective Services		Г
1.	Written policy for investigations	By June 30, policy for investigations will be developed.	Achieved
2.	Risk assessment tool/process for child abuse/neglect investigations	By September 30, current risk assessment will be modified to provide for tool and process.	In process
3.	Revise and modify after hours program for investigative practice	By September 30, program will be implemented.	Achieved
4.	Child fatality review committee	On-going Child Fatality Review implementation strategies were to be effective March 31, 2003.	In process
Serv	ices to Children and Families		
1.	Policies, procedures, and practices	By June 30, develop strategy for strengthening policies, procedures, and practices regarding the provision of services to families and children.	In process
2.	Developing an on-call program to support families and foster parents	By September 30, an on-call program will be developed and implemented.	Achieved
3.	Clarification of roles of social workers and other staff in case planning and service provision	By September 30, identified changes to the functional duties, policies and procedures will be fully implemented.	Achieved
Plac	ement of Children		
1.	Independent assessment of the placement process	By June 30, action steps will be developed.	Achieved
2.	Revision of foster care policy	By September 30, foster care policy will be developed.	In process
3.	Developing after hours capacity to serve foster parents/families in crisis situations	By September 30, development of after hours capacity to service foster parents/families in crisis situations.	Achieved

Table 5: Summary of Progress on Implementation Strategies as of September 30, 2003
(Continued)

	(Continucu)					
	Implementation Strategy	Performance Benchmark as of September 30, 2003	Status			
Planning						
1.	Revision to case planning policies and procedures	By September 30, policies and procedures on case planning will be revised.	In process			
2.	Clarification of contract agencies case planning responsibilities	By June 30, case planning policies will be revised and by September 30, case planning policies will be implemented.	Initial Steps Achieved			
3.	Developing a quality assurance protocol re: case planning	By September 30, the quality assurance protocol will be developed.	Achieved for foster care cases			
4.	Engaging families in case planning	By September 30, a process for meeting with families will be developed.	In process			
5.	Providing clinical expertise in case planning By September 30, the policies will be developed.		Achieved			
6.	Community sites for parent and child visitation	By September 30, new contracts will incorporate the requirement for community sites for parental visitation and the implementation of community sites to facilitate parental visitation will begin.	Achieved			
Adop	otion and Post Adoption					
1.	Strategy to facilitate adoption for children in foster care with a goal of adoption	By June 30, CFSA will convene a permanency planning team meeting to provide for the review of children with a goal of adoption and the development of child specific plans.	Beginning Implementation			
		By September 30, for those children with an adoptive resource but no finalization, CFSA will develop a child specific plan and take all reasonable steps to move the adoption to finalization and review progress on children every 60 days.	Beginning Implementation			
		By September 30, CFSA will clarify in policy the expectations for adoption planning of children and provide to all staff.	In-process			
2.	Additional resources for adoption recruitment and support efforts	Before September 30, CFSA will identify the staff and other resources to be allocated to adoptive home recruitment and support FYs 04 and 05.	Partially achieved			

	Table 5: Summary of Progress on Implementation Strategies as of September 30, 2003 (Continued)							
	Implementation Strategy	Performance Benchmark as of September 30, 2003	Status					
Supe	Supervision of Placement							
1.	Social work visitation of children in placement	By September 30, the policy regarding social worker visitation to children in placement will be clarified.	In process					
2.	Performance-based contracts	CFSA contracts will reflect MFO standards for supervision of placements.	On target					
Case	supervision of placements. Case Review Strategies 1. Redesign of administrative review process By September 30, interim benchmarks for phase-in of the redesigned administrative review process will be established by CFSA in consultation with the Monitor and incorporated into the Implementation Plan. 2. Phased implementation of MFO special reviews By September 30, interim benchmarks for phase-in of the redesigned administrative review process will be established by CFSA in consultation with the Monitor and incorporated into the Implementation Plan. Proposal developed by reviews set forth in the MFO, subject to the approval of CFSA; monitor							
1.		the redesigned administrative review process will be established by CFSA in consultation with the Monitor	Achieved					
2.		provide for the phased implementation of the special reviews set forth in the MFO, subject to the approval of	developed by					
Staff	1. Redesign of administrative review process By September 30, interim benchmarks for phase-in of the redesigned administrative review process will be established by CFSA in consultation with the Monitor and incorporated into the Implementation Plan. 2. Phased implementation of MFO special reviews By September 30, CFSA will develop procedures to provide for the phased implementation of the special reviews set forth in the MFO, subject to the approval of the Court Monitor. Proposal developed by CFSA; monitor approval pending. CFSA will develop and implement a written recruitment and retention plan that identifies CFSA strategies, time frames and recruitment resources allocated to ensure there are sufficient professional and paraprofessional staff to achieve compliance with the caseload ratios specified in the MFO. 2. Caseload and staffing projections for the future By June 30, CFSA will review and compare total projected caseloads and staffing levels. CFSA will develop, in conjunction with the Monitor, annual hiring targets with six month benchmarks.							
1.		recruitment and retention plan that identifies CFSA strategies, time frames and recruitment resources allocated to ensure there are sufficient professional and paraprofessional staff to achieve compliance with the	Achieved					
2.	0.1	projected caseloads and staffing levels. CFSA will develop, in conjunction with the Monitor, annual hiring	provided by CFSA. Monitor					
Traiı	ning							
1.	Development of training advisory committee	By September 30, develop a training advisory committee.	In process					
2.	Redesign of training academy	By September 30, develop an annual training plan that identifies the training to be provided to social workers, supervisors, managers, private providers, foster and adoptive parents, and attorneys as well as the training that will be offered for the judicial system.	Achieved					

Table 5: Summary of Progress on Implementation Strategies as of September 30, 2003 (Continued)							
	Implementation Strategy	Performance Benchmark as of September 30, 2003	Status				
Training (Continued)							
3.	Training Units	CFSA will maintain training units for new workers.	Achieved				
Reso	urce Development						
1.	Review of staff qualifications and competency for foster home, group home and independent living licensing and monitoring. By September 30, CFSA will review the qualifications and competencies required for licensing/monitoring staff. Modification of job descriptions, qualifications and training of existing staff will be completed as appropriate.		Achieved				
2.	Licensing and monitoring staff	By September 30, CFSA will provide sufficient Licensing & Monitoring staff and make best efforts to hire the 20 new positions.	Partially Achieved				
3.	Licensure of kinship foster homes	By September 30, CFSA will develop and implement policies on the licensure of kinship foster homes.					
4.	Access to criminal records and FBI clearance information	By September 30, the District will make all reasonable efforts to provide timely access to criminal records and FBI clearance information necessary for approval of emergency placements for children with relatives and approval of foster adoptive families.	In process				
Cont	ract Review		1				
1.	Contract office and job description By June 30, based on the review of CFSA's contract operations and internal expertise, CFSA will complete restructuring of its Contracts Office and review and modify relevant job descriptions.		Achieved				
2.	RFP and award contracts	By September 30, CFSA will issue new RFP's and award the first round of contracts for congregate care, family care, and community based care/preventive services.	Partially Achieved				
Infor	mation Systems						
1.	Management information reports	By September 30, CFSA with the approval of the Monitor will identify the reports to be produced in FACES and the frequency of reports, which will assist the Agency in meeting goals of safety, permanency, well-being, and monitoring compliance with the MFO and IP.	Achieved				
Fina	ncial Development						
1.	Foster parent board rate adjustments	By September 30, foster parent board rates shall be adjusted annually at the start of each fiscal year to assure that they meet the USDA standard for raising a child in the urban south.	Achieved by January 1, 2004				

		Benchmark as of	Level of Performance	Benchmark	Direction
	Outcome	June 30, 2003	as of July 31, 2003	Met as of July 31, 2003	Of Change
Prot	tective Services			T	
1.	Initiation of investigations of child abuse and neglect	60% of investigations will be initiated within 48 hours	36% of investigations were initiated within 48 hours.	Not achieved	Improved
2.	Timely completion of investigations	60% of investigations must be completed within 30 days	21% of investigations were completed within 30 days.	Not achieved	Declining
3.	Checking for prior history	75% of child abuse and/or neglect reports will show evidence that the investigator checked for prior reports of abuse and/or neglect.	100% of child abuse and neglect reports were checked for prior reports.	Achieved	Improved
Serv	ices to Children and Fam	ilies			
1.	Provision of appropriate services in accordance with a child or family's case pan	Appropriate services will be offered and children/families will be assisted to use services 50% of applicable cases applicable cases to avoid: a. placement b. replacement c. disruption of adoptive placement d. disruption of foster placement.	50% of applicable cases were offered appropriate services.	Achieved	(Not previously measured)
Place	ement of Children	ı	ı	ı	1
1.	Placement of children with their siblings	65% of children in out-of-home placements will be placed with some or all of their siblings.	66% of children in out- of-home care were placed with some or all of their siblings.	Achieved	Improved
2.	Children under 12 placed in congregate care	No more than 65 children under age 12 will be placed in congregate care settings for more than 30 days unless the child has special treatment needs.	47 children under the age of 12 were placed in congregate care for more than 30 days.	Achieved	Improved
3.	Sibling visitation when children are apart	Baseline for performance will be established.	7% of children had visits with their siblings at least monthly; 46% of children had no visits.	This is the baseline performance.	(Not previously measured)

Table 6: Summary of Progress on Outcomes as of July 31, 2003 (Continued)					
	Outcome	Benchmark as of June 30, 2003	Level of Performance as of July 31, 2003	Benchmark Met as of July 31, 2003	Direction Of Change
4.	Children staying overnight in intake processing center	No child under age 12 will stay overnight in in-house Intake Center.	No children under the age of 12 stayed overnight in the CFSA in-house Intake Center.	Achieved	Important
5.	Children placed more than 100 miles outside the District	No more than 60 children will be placed 100 miles or more outside of the District.	64 children were placed in facilities more than 100 miles outside the District.	Partially Achieved	No Change
6.	Exploration of relative resources for placement of children	CFSA will investigate resources in 50% of cases requiring removal of children from their homes	Unable to determine	Unable to determine	Unable to determine
7.	Improving stability	No more than 10% of children in foster care will have had three or more placements in the previous 12 months	8% of children in foster care have had three or more placements.	Achieved	Unable to determine
8.	Licensure of foster homes and group placements	80% of foster homes, group homes, and independent living facilities will have current and valid licenses	Documentation of a current foster home license was provided for 56% of homes. 100% of group homes and ILPs are licensed.	Partially Achieved	Improved
9.	Capacity limitation for group homes	Baseline performance will be established	37% of children placed in group homes were placed in group-care settings with more than eight children.	This is the baseline performance.	(Not previously measured)
10.	Capacity for foster homes	Baseline performance will be established. No new placements after June 30, 2003 shall be a foster home or facility in excess of its license.	6% of children placed in foster homes were placed in homes with more than three foster children.	This is the baseline performance.	(Not previously measured)
11.	Medical screening prior to foster care placement	50% of children in foster care will have a health screening prior to placement.	Unable to determine	Unable to determine	
Case	Planning				
1.	Current case planning	60% of case plans will be current	61% of case plans were current	Achieved	Improved

Table 6: Summary of Progress on Outcomes as of July 31, 2003 (Continued)					
	Outcome	Benchmark as of June 30, 2003	Level of Performance as of July 31, 2003	Benchmark Met as of July 31, 2003	Direction Of Change
Ado	ption and Post Adoption				
1.	Timely approval of resource parents	Decisions will be made in 120 days for 50% of foster and adoptive applicants	Unable to determine	Unable to determine	
2.	Post adoption services	Baseline to be established	The Monitor does not yet have a baseline for this outcome.	N/A	
Supe	ervision of Placement				
1.	Monthly visits to children in foster care	CFSA and private agency social workers with case management responsibility shall make monthly visits to children in out-of-home care in 50% of cases.	54% of children were visited by their social worker in July 2003	Achieved	Improved
Case	Review System				
1.	Administrative reviews of case progress	70% of foster care cases will have had an Administrative Case Review within 180 days of entering care and every 180 days thereafter.	61% of foster care cases had a current administrative review.	Not achieved	Improved
Case	loads				
1.	Case load of workers	September 30 caseload benchmark: -Investigators will have no more than 16 investigations -Case carrying social workers shall have no more than 27 cases -Adoption workers shall have no more than 27 children -50% of supervisors will be responsible for no more than 6 workers	See Section XIX B of this report.	Substantially achieved with exception of Investigation Workers	Improved
Trai	ning				
1.	80 hours of pre-service training for new workers	90% will receive the required 80 hours of pre-service training	96% of the 46 new workers received 80 hours or pre-service training.	Achieved	Improved
2.	40 hours of pre-service training for new supervisors	50% will receive a minimum of 40 hours of pre-service training on supervision of child welfare workers	100% of the new supervisors received 40 hours of pre-service training.	Achieved	Improved

III. MOVING FORWARD

On balance, the record of accomplishments in the past six months is considerable and reflects an organization that is committed to positive change and has the leadership and skills to carry it out. While not all performance benchmarks have been met and there are several areas in which accelerating progress is urgent, the District's child welfare system is currently positioned to make rapid progress in the next six months. There is a strong and committed leadership team that is appropriately focusing on improving case practice and ensuring that the administrative infrastructure supports and holds all levels of the Agency accountable for results. Secondly, the continuing progress in hiring new workers and reducing caseloads will begin to have a beneficial effect in several ways. With lower and reasonable caseloads, properly trained and supervised workers will be able to provide the level of services that they know children and families need and that they want to provide. The Agency will be able to enhance the skills of workers through meaningful training of social workers and supervisors. With lower caseloads, the Agency will be able to hold workers, supervisors and managers accountable for improved results for children and families. A third reason for optimism is the demonstrable improvement in collaboration with private providers, community collaboratives, other agencies of District government and the Family Court.

This is not to say that there are not serious issues remaining to be identified and resolved. However, the climate for working together on behalf of children and families is very different now than several years ago. The system still does not consistently achieve the results that are expected and essential for many children and families but there is a growing ability, both within the child welfare agency and with the other stakeholders in the system, to move forward collectively, not solely in response to crisis, but in a more strategic and planful way.

PART TWO: DETAILED STATUS OF PERFORMANCE ON IMPLEMENTATION PLAN BENCHMARKS

This section of the report provides the data, analysis and descriptive information that informs the Monitor's conclusions on the District's progress.

I. PROTECTIVE SERVICES

A. Key Implementation Strategies

1. Written Policy for Investigations

a. Requirement

CFSA will develop and promulgate comprehensive written policy for investigations, including:

- coordinated investigations with the Metropolitan Police Department;
- development and implementation of a policy for consistent screening of Hotline calls;
- policy for prioritization of response and response times;
- final determination policy;
- policy for determining whether children are endangered and must be removed from their home; and
- policy for the use of a standardized form to record all abuse/neglect final determinations.

(Implementation Plan, Section II, p. 7)

b. Performance Benchmark

By June 30, 2003, the policy for investigations will be developed. By September 30, 2003, the policy for investigations will be promulgated and fully implemented, except for additional implementation/training time for new risk assessment.

c. Findings

CFSA developed revised policies for the Hotline and Investigations prior to June 30, 2003.

These policies were provided in draft format to the Monitor during spring 2003. The Monitor reviewed the draft policies and provided written comments and recommendations to the Agency. Additionally, the Monitor met with CFSA to discuss the changes being made to the Hotline and Investigations policies during the revision process. The Agency made the revisions suggested by CSSP in September 2003. After reviewing the September 2003 policy drafts, the Monitor provided a few additional comments related to the need for stronger policy and procedure regarding the use of risk and safety assessments – a need that was identified in a recent CSSP review of the Hotline functioning⁶ as well as from consultation obtained from the Child Welfare Institute by CFSA.

CFSA is currently making the additional changes to the policies, with a completion date of January 2004. Once the policies are complete, all Hotline and Investigations staff will be trained. CFSA has scheduled three 2½-day training sessions for January 26 through February 11 on the new policy to accommodate all Intake and Investigations staff. An updated policy and procedure manual is also being developed and will be provided to Hotline and Investigations staff upon its completion.

Overall, the Hotline and Investigations policies are significantly improved. Continued attention should be given to the successful implementation of the policies and ensuring that enough staff are available to institutionalize the changes. Improvements include:

- A description of the legal definitions of abuse and neglect, incorporating recently passed District legislation (DC-2-22). The definitions seek to clarify for workers what constitutes alleged child abuse or neglect and what is information and referral. The policy also instructs workers how to handle cases of assault, institutional abuse, and reports involving other jurisdictions.
- A description of mandated reporters and their responsibilities.
- A clear policy statement that CFSA workers are required to make reports to the Hotline when allegations of abuse and neglect arise in open cases at the Agency.
- Clear statements of how and when CFSA is to work with the Metropolitan Police Department.
- Criteria for assigning priority levels for investigation of reports.
- Inclusion of child vulnerability and caretaker/family and child danger factors.

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⁶ See <u>An Assessment of the Functioning of the Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline of the District of Columbia, Child and Family Services Agency.</u>

2. Risk Assessment Tool/Process for Child Abuse/Neglect Investigations

a. <u>Requirement</u>

The <u>LaShawn</u> Implementation Plan requires that CFSA will assess the need for, and, if needed, develop/revise and implement a comprehensive risk assessment tool and process for use in all child abuse and neglect investigations (Implementation Plan, Section II, p. 7).

b. Performance Benchmark

By September 30, 2003 CFSA will modify its current risk assessment to provide for a comprehensive risk assessment tool and process for use in all child abuse and neglect investigations.

c. Findings

CFSA contracted with the Child Welfare Institute (CWI), a nationally-recognized resource in the field, to assist it with the review and revision of its current safety and risk assessments. CWI completed this comprehensive assessment with the aid of an internal CFSA workgroup. This much needed assessment was completed on September 30, 2003 and, as a result, CFSA did not meet the September 30 benchmark date for actually revising the tools and process.

As a result of the consultation and its recommendations, CFSA is replacing the current Hotline Screening Tool with an updated tool developed by CWI. The Monitor is pleased that the Agency is in the final stages of developing the risk assessment. CFSA expects the new tool will be on-line in FACES by March 31, 2004. Prior to this implementation, Hotline workers will be trained on how to use the new screening tool manually. CWI also provided recommendations to modify the FACES screens for Safety Assessment for Intake and Investigations. A CFSA FACES design workgroup has begun to design the FACES screens based on the CWI recommendations. A meeting with CWI and key management staff was scheduled for January 15, 2004 to review the progress to date and determine next steps. The anticipated completion date for the FACES design work and training for staff for the Safety Assessment is March 31, 2004.

3. Revise and Modify After Hours Program for Investigative Practice

a. Requirement

The <u>LaShawn</u> Implementation Plan required CFSA to revise and modify its after hours program to improve the efficiency and quality of after hours investigations of child abuse and neglect. (Implementation Plan, Section II, p. 7)

b. Performance Benchmark

By April 30, 2003, revisions to the after hours program will be completed. By September 30, 2003 the after hours program will be implemented.

c. Findings

CFSA developed and is implementing an after hours/weekend program to handle priority investigations and ensure immediate intervention is available for those children who may be at imminent risk of harm (Priority Level I). A group of trained investigators are now available 24 hours a day, seven days a week to respond to emergencies.

Under this plan, non-emergent investigations will continue to be assigned to the day shift workers who are better able to make collateral contacts with family members, teachers, doctors and others involved with the child. Workers in the after hours program will make the initial contacts with children and families when there is an imminent risk of harm and then transfer those cases to the day shift workers once the level of danger has been ameliorated.

As indicated in the Monitor's assessment of the functioning of the Hotline⁷, CFSA now has a functional program for round the clock investigations. However, full staffing of the Hotline at all times remains an issue. CFSA has indicated that it expects full implementation with all needed staff (1 Hotline Manager, 4 Hotline Supervisors, 7 Hotline workers and 12 Hotline Investigators) to be complete by January 2004.

4. Child Fatality Review Committee

a. <u>Requirement</u>

The <u>LaShawn</u> Implementation Plan requires that all child fatalities involving a child known to CFSA at any time within four years prior to the death will be comprehensively reviewed by an Internal CFSA Committee, with a representative of the Court Monitor. The Internal Committee will issue recommendations to the CFSA Director for systemic and case specific change (Implementation Plan, Section II, p. 8).

The Plan further requires the CFSA Director to consider the recommendations of the Internal CFSA Committee and the City-wide Child Fatality Review Committee and implement recommendations, as appropriate (Implementation Plan, Section II, p. 9).

b. Performance Benchmark

Child Fatality Review implementation strategies were to be effective March 31, 2003 and will be on on-going.

c. Findings

CFSA has an internal child fatality review committee that meets to comprehensively review all fatalities involving children known to CFSA during the previous four years. Recommendations are developed as part of this process to reform casework practice and address macro level issues that lead to poor outcomes for children. While CFSA informs the Monitor of all child fatality review meetings, until very recently, it has not developed a consistent process for immediately notifying the Monitor of all child fatalities. The

⁷ See <u>An Assessment of the Functioning of the Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline of the District of Columbia, Child and Family Services Agency</u>.

Monitor and the Agency have discussed this and there have been recent improvements in timely notification and follow-up.

A meeting was convened by the Monitor on July 28, 2003 with CFSA managers and members and staff of the City-wide Child Fatality Review Committee to improve the process for the City-wide interagency review of cases involving CFSA. This meeting focused particularly on developing a seamless and non-duplicative process for ensuring that cases are comprehensively reviewed both internally by CFSA and across all public and private agencies in the city-wide review committee meeting. Collaboration between CFSA and the City-wide Committee has improved recently.

Recommendations from both the internal and the City-wide Child Fatality Review Committees are provided to the Director of the Agency. Those recommendations are being considered within the context of the CFSA reform efforts and are implemented as appropriate.

During 2003, there were 26 fatalities of children that were reported to the CFSA Child Fatality Unit. In 2002, there were 35 child fatalities. These include deaths of children in CFSA custody, in families in which there is an open child protective services case and children whose families had prior involvement with the Agency. In addition, CFSA reviews a child's death when it is suspected that the cause is abuse or neglect and CFSA gets involved with a family at the time of the child's death. See Table 7 for the data on the demographics of child fatalities in 2002 and 2003.

The Monitor is quite concerned that the formal child fatality reviews are not being held swiftly enough and, as a result, there is a developing backlog of 17 child fatalities in 2002 and 2003 that have not been reviewed internally by CFSA. Indeed, only 8 of the 19 "applicable" child fatalities in 2003 have been reviewed by the CFSA committee (see Table 8 below). Despite the backlog in complete reviews, the Agency does convene "critical incident staffing" with internal staff immediately after learning of any child death as a way to begin to gather information and to ensure that necessary steps are being taken to protect the siblings or other children in the home.

The lack of timely "cause of death" findings from the Medical Examiner's office is also of concern. This delay puts an additional strain on the Agency as it attempts to make informed decisions about the safety of siblings and other children in the household.

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⁸ CFSA reviews the deaths of children who have died as a result of suspected child abuse and/or neglect or whose families have been previously known to CFSA. Prior to the development of the Implementation Plan in April 2003, CFSA was required to review the deaths of children that had been involved with the agency anytime in the previous ten years. The revised Implementation Plan (approved by the Court on May 15, 2003) requires that the Agency review the deaths of children involved with the Agency during the previous four years.

Table 7: Child Fatalities of Children Known to CFSA (2002 and 2003)

(2002 and 2003)											
	Age of child at time of death				Cause of death						
	<u>≤</u> 6 mo.	>6 mo. to 10 yr	10 to 17	18 & over	TBD or Undeter- mined	Natural or Illness	Accident or Auto Accident or Fire	Stabbing or Gunshot or Suicide	Hom- icide	Still birth or SIDS	Shaken Baby or Abuse
2002	14	11	5	5	10	6	3	7	4*	3	2
2003	17	3	3	3	14	6	0	3	0	3	0

^{*}In 2002, 3 of the 4 homicides occurred in children under the age of 4.

Source: CFSA Child Fatality Coordinator; data accurate as of January 6, 2004.

Table 8: CFSA Child Fatality Reviews and Prior CFSA Involvement with Family (2002 and 2003)

		r			1			
	Number of Fatalities	Reviews held regarding children who died during the year			CFSA invol with child/ prior to o	CFSA case status at time of death		
		Review Held	Review Pending	Review Not Applicable	No Previous Involvement	Known to Agency	Active	Closed
2002	35	22	6	7*	4	31	11	20
2003	26	8	11	7**	6	20	11	9

^{*}In 2002, the 7 "not applicable" cases included 4 cases that were not known to the Agency prior to the child's death. The remaining three cases are outside the four year review period.

Source: CFSA Child Fatality Coordinator; status as of January 6, 2004.

^{**}In 2003, the 7 "not applicable" cases included 6 cases that were not known to the Agency prior to the death. The remaining case is outside the four-year review period.

B. Outcomes

1. Initiation of Investigations of Child Abuse and Neglect

a. <u>Requirements</u>

<u>LaShawn A. v. Williams</u> Modified Final Order (MFO) and Implementation Plan require that all reports of abuse or neglect must be initiated within 48 hours of a report to the Hotline. Initiation of an investigation requires a face-to-face interview with the child or children who are the subject of the report. (Modified Final Order, Section II, G).

b. Performance Benchmark

The <u>LaShawn</u> Implementation Plan requires that by June 30, 2003, 60% of investigations will be initiated within 48 hours (Implementation Plan, Section II, 2).

c. Source of Data

The data for this measure were derived from a review of case records from two separate random samples: (1) all cases that were open for investigation during July 2003 (this includes cases that were reported before July but were not complete by July 1 and all new cases reported in July) and (2) all new investigations that were initially opened during the month of July 2003.

d. Findings

Data from the first sample (all cases that were open for investigation during July 2003) indicate that 28% of the 145 cases were initiated within 24 hours and 8% were initiated between 24 and 48 hours. Therefore, a total of 36% of the cases were initiated within 48 hours (see Figure 3). In 53% of cases, initiation of the investigation was not within 48 hours. In 11% of the cases, there was insufficient documentation to determine how much time elapsed between the call to the Hotline and the beginning of the investigation. It is important to note that an investigation is not considered to have been initiated until the worker sees the children in the household.

Further, in an effort to assess the most current practice in investigations, CSSP also looked at a separate sample of new reports to the Hotline in July that had been accepted for investigation. Of the 130 cases reviewed, 54% were initiated within 48 hours, representing a significant improvement over the 36% of cases that were initiated within 48 hours in the broader sample described above.

CFSA administrative data for July 2003 indicate that 42% of reports of abuse and/or neglect were initiated within 48 hours.

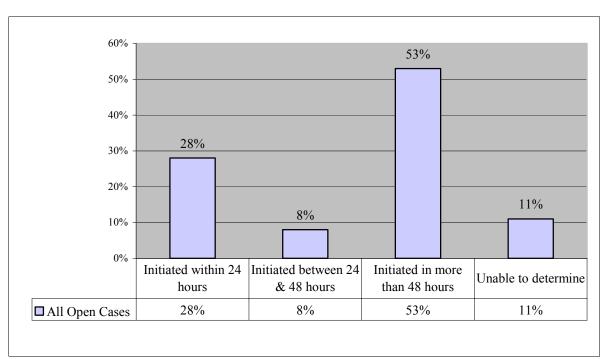


Figure 3: Percentage of Investigations Initiated Within 24 and 48 Hours (N=145)

Source: CSSP case record review of all cases open in investigations during July 2003.

2. Timely Completion of Investigations

a. Requirement

<u>LaShawn A. v. Williams</u> requires that all abuse or neglect investigations must by completed within 30 days (Modified Final Order, Section II, G).

b. <u>Performance Benchmark</u>

The <u>LaShawn</u> Implementation Plan requires that by June 30, 2003, 60% of investigations will be completed within 30 days (Implementation Plan, Section II, 3).

c. Source of Data

The data for this measure were derived from a review of case records from two separate random samples: (1) all cases that were open for investigation during July 2003. (This includes cases that were reported before July but were not complete by July 1 and all new cases reported in July) and (2) all new investigations that were initially opened during the month of July 2003.

d. Findings

The data from the first sample (all cases that were open in investigations during July 2003) show that 21% of the 145 cases were completed within 30 days. Twenty-seven percent (27%) were completed between 30 and 60 days. Forty-one percent (41%) were completed in more than 60 days and in 16 cases (11%), the investigation was not complete at the time of the review (see Figure 4).

The Monitor also reviewed data from a sample of cases that were newly received during the month of July 2003 in order to assess CFSA's most current practice. Of the 130 cases received in July, 45% were completed within 30 days, a significant improvement over the 21% of investigations completed within 30 days in the sample of all open cases as described above.

CFSA administrative data from July indicate that 48% of investigations were completed within 30 days.

45% 41% 40% 35% 30% 27% 25% 21% 20% 15% 11% 10% 5% 0% Completed within 30 - Completed within 30 -Completed in more Case still open - over than 60 days 30 days days 60 days

Figure 4: Percentage of All Open Investigations Completed Within 30 Days (N=145)

Source: CSSP case record review of all cases open in investigations during July 2003.

Investigations Backlog

CFSA administrative data regarding the "backlog" of cases in the investigations unit is illustrated in Table 9 on page 35. The backlog includes any investigation that has been open for more than 30 days. The Monitor is quite alarmed that the backlog has increased from a low of 93 in January 2003 to a high of 354 in September 2003. This performance is worse than what was found in the Monitor's September 2002 report *Progress in Meeting Probationary Period Performance Standards for the District of Columbia Child and Family Services Agency*. Immediate actions to correct this situation are necessary.

The Agency has reported that it is undertaking a number of strategies to address the backlog, including recruitment for a new administrator, targeted recruitment for experienced investigators and training on the new Investigations policy.

Table 9: Backlog of Investigations Incomplete After 30 Days January 2003 — September 2003

	Investigation opened 31 – 60 days	Investigation opened 61+ days	TOTAL
January	65	28	93
February	113	26	139
March	92	37	129
April	140	32	172
May	143	45	188
June	122	86	208
July	137	119	256
August	150	171	321
September	164	190	354

Source: CFSA administrative data.

3. Checking for Prior History (Past Reports of Abuse or Neglect and/or Prior Involvement with the Child Welfare System)

a. <u>Requirement</u>

<u>LaShawn A. v. Williams</u> requires that an investigating worker or supervisor reviewing a report of abuse or neglect shall use the information system to determine whether there have been prior reports of abuse/neglect in that family or to that child (Modified Final Order, Section II, C).

b. Performance Benchmark

The <u>LaShawn</u> Implementation Plan requires that by June 30, 2003, 75% of child abuse and/or neglect reports will show evidence that the investigator checked for prior reports of abuse and/or neglect. (Implementation Plan, Section II, 7).

c. Source of Data

The FACES information system automatically checks prior history on any report entered. An on-site review of the functionality of FACES was completed by the Monitor.

d. Findings

The Agency has met this performance measure. FACES electronically searches the database and completes a check for prior reports anytime (100%) a client is added. This occurs at the Hotline, during the investigation or anytime an on-going worker adds a name to FACES. FACES uses the following criteria to search its database – first and last names, last name and date of birth, social security number, and address. Each time a worker attempts to enter a client, FACES uses the above criteria for its search and then prompts the worker with "The client you entered may already exist in FACES." Workers can then easily look through the list of potential matches to determine if the client they are entering has been involved with CFSA.

II. SERVICES TO CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

A. Key Implementation Strategies

1. Policies, Procedures, and Practices

a. Requirement

The <u>LaShawn</u> Implementation Plan requires CFSA to strengthen policies, procedures and practices regarding the provision of services to families and children, including:

- Improving the documentation of services provided to stabilize families; and
- Implementation of case practice strategies to improve service delivery through:
 - Regular use of case planning conferences
 - Routine use of disruption conferences
 - Transfer case staffing when cases are transferred between units or to new workers, and
 - Adoption case staffing

(Implementation Plan, Section III, p. 15).

b. Performance Benchmark

By June 2003, the Agency will develop its strategy for strengthening policies, procedures and practices regarding the provision of services to families and children (Implementation Plan, Section III, p. 15).

c. Findings

CFSA has developed a strategy and begun implementing staffing and conferences to ensure comprehensive services are planned for and provided to families and children. These include the use of:

- disruption staffing for children who experience a placement disruption (884 disruption staffing were held in FY03),
- transfer staffing for children whose case is transferred from one social worker to another,
- multiple placement staffing for children with 3 or more placements, and
- planning conferences at 7 and 45 days post removal.

The Agency is also currently engaged in a comprehensive and inclusive planning process to develop facilitated family team meetings that will be used whenever a child is removed from home or experiences a placement change, as well as for case planning throughout the life of a case. CFSA is utilizing expert consultation from the Annie E. Casey Foundation's *Family to Family* Initiative to move this work forward. Additionally, the Agency has included multiple community stakeholders including foster parents, the Family Court, the Collaboratives and the Court Monitor in the development of this new practice model.

The Agency is also considering how the use of these and other meetings can support efforts to expedite permanency for children. The use of permanency planning staffing is part of the strategy to overhaul how services are planned and provided in order to achieve timely permanency for children with a goal of adoption. Sarah Greenblatt, an expert in adoption practice at Casey Family Services, has been retained to assist the Agency in assessing its current adoption practices and developing permanency planning team staffing. These staffing will assist the Agency in developing child specific recruitment plans and ensure that children with a goal of adoption are matched with appropriate preadoptive families.

Currently, the four temporary teams operate with one facilitator and one scheduler each. These teams are comprised of existing full time staff who are also handling other job responsibilities. Once the permanency planning staffing process is refined and fully operational, the Agency plans to dedicate two full time staff as facilitators and one clerical staff as a scheduler/coordinator. The Monitor is not convinced that two full time staff are sufficient to manage this process and rapidly staff all children in the adoption backlog.

2. Developing an On-Call Program to Support Families and Foster Parents

a. <u>Requirement</u>

The <u>LaShawn</u> Implementation Plan requires CFSA to develop an on-call program of social workers to support families and foster parents.

b. Performance Benchmark

By September 30, 2003, an on-call program will be developed and implemented (Implementation Plan, Section III, p 16).

c. Findings

CFSA has developed and implemented on on-call program to support families and foster parents. The purpose of the program is to utilize on-call social workers to provide crisis intervention and support to families and foster parents during non-business hours. Intervention and/or support can be provided by phone or face-to-face depending upon the identified needs of the families. Workers from throughout the Agency volunteer (and are compensated) for on-call duty and remain on-call for one week at a time.

This is an incredibly important development as CFSA's ability to provide support to families when they need it and where they need it is a critical component of good social work practice. There are anecdotal reports that the on-call program is working (for example, placement disruptions being avoided) but, because it is a new program, fine-tuning is still needed to ensure its full effectiveness.

The on-call program is activated through the Hotline. Families requesting crisis assistance contact the Hotline and a brief assessment is completed to ensure there are no new concerns or allegations of abuse/neglect. Any new concerns of abuse or neglect are

sent to the Investigations Unit as part of the standard protocol for managing these allegations.

Once it is determined that no new allegations of abuse/neglect are being made, the Hotline worker contacts the on-call program administrator who then activates one of four on-call workers. On-call social workers are expected to respond within 10 minutes to the program administrator and then immediately make contact with the child and family in need. This can be either phone or in-person intervention depending on the need. On-call social workers are required to document their work and forward this information to the on-going worker so that it is available for additional follow-up at the beginning of the next business day.

3. Clarification of Roles of Social Workers and Other Staff in Case Planning and Service Provision

a. Requirement

The <u>LaShawn</u> Implementation Plan requires CFSA to clarify the role of the SSA, clerical assistant, SSR, social worker and supervisor in case planning and the provision of services to children and families through written functional duties, and in CFSA policies and procedures (Implementation Plan, Section III, p 16.) The need for this work grew out of confusion about roles and responsibilities that was evident in a number of critical case incidents in 2001 and 2002.

b. Performance Benchmark

By April 30, 2003, CFSA will make needed changes to the functional duties, policies and procedures. By September 30, 2003, these changes will be fully implemented.

c. Findings

CFSA clarified the roles of the SSA, clerical assistant, SSR, social worker and supervisor through the development of a "position description management" policy in April 2003. All employees now receive a copy of the position description that defines the functions of his/her assigned job. The policy states that all employees are to work within their position description unless work outside of the description is discussed with and approved by their supervisor.

In reviewing the position descriptions of the SSA, clerical assistant, social worker and supervisor, CFSA determined that the SSA, social worker and supervisor job descriptions were adequate. An updated clerical assistant job description was, however, developed as a result of this assessment.

In the Monitor's view, there has been improvement within the organization to clarify the respective roles and responsibilities of staff that is being reinforced through ongoing management and supervision.

B. Outcomes

1. Provision of Appropriate Services in Accordance with a Child or Family's Case Plan

a. Requirement

The <u>LaShawn A. v. Williams</u> Modified Final Order requires that CFSA shall provide all services necessary to children, parents, extended families, and foster parents to ensure children's safety, permanency and well-being. (Modified Final Order, Section III, B.1-4.).

b. Performance Benchmarks

The Implementation Plan specifically requires the following performance measures related to services for children and families:

By June 30, 2003, appropriate services, including all services identified in the case plan, will be offered and children/families will be assisted to use services in 50% of applicable cases, for the purposes of:

- enabling children who have been the subject of a substantiated abuse/neglect report to avoid placement and to remain safely in their own homes (Implementation Plan, Section III, 2.a)
- enabling children who have been returned from foster care to parents or relatives to remain with those family members and avoid replacement in foster care (Implementation Plan, Section III. 2.b).
- avoiding the disruption of an adoptive placement (Implementation Plan, Section III, 2.c).
- preventing the disruption of a foster home placement, under those circumstances in which the placement is a long-term placement and the placement is beneficial to the child (Implementation Plan, Section III, 2.d).

c. Source of Data

The Center for the Study of Social Policy, the Child and Family Services Agency, and the Plaintiffs agreed to use a qualitative process similar to the Federal Child and Family Service Reviews to evaluate services to children and families. The full results of the qualitative review can be found in the recent report, <u>LaShawn A. v. Williams Qualitative Review: Process, Results, and Recommendations</u> (January 2004) from CSSP. In the Quality Service Review, teams of two people (a child welfare expert and a CFSA staff member) reviewed 38 cases (32 out-of-home cases and 6 in-home cases) pulled from a random sample of all open cases at the Agency. While this is not a statistically valid sample of cases from the Agency, each case is a good measure of how children and families are being served by CFSA. The teams interviewed those individuals involved in the cases while focusing on the following exploratory measures: safety, permanency,

family relationships, education and family needs, supervision, case planning, and services.

d. **Findings**

The results from the Quality Service Review that are related specifically to services of children and families are highlighted below in Figures 5, 6, 7 and 8.

In general, the Monitor found that the Agency has met the performance standard of providing services to children and families in 50% of the reviewed cases. The Quality Service Review highlights that families and children are receiving multiple services to meet educational, mental health, physical health and other needs. In many instances, however, those services were not well matched to the identified underlying needs or sufficiently coordinated. In a few cases, the needed resources (i.e., substance abuse treatment) were not available. For more information on the findings in the Quality Service Review, please see Qualitative Review: Process, Results and Recommendations (January 2004), Center for the Study of Social Policy.

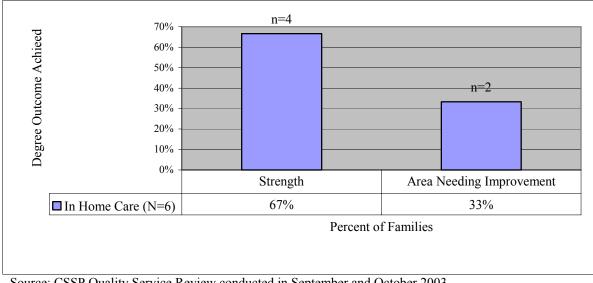


Figure 5: Services to Families to Protect Child(ren) in Their Homes and Prevent Removal

Source: CSSP Quality Service Review conducted in September and October 2003.

60% 55% 54% 50% Degree Outcome Achieved 46% 45% 50% 40% 30% 20% 10% 0% Strength Area Needing Improvement 46% 54% ■ All Cases (N=38) ■ Out-of-Home Case (N=32) 45% 55% ☐ In Home Care (N=6) 50% 50% Percent of Families

Figure 6: Availability of Services and Resources for Children

Source: CSSP Quality Service Review conducted in September and October 2003

100% IN-HOME CARE OUT-OF- HOME 80% **CARE** 60% 40% 20% 0% Education Physical Education Physical Mental Mental Health Health Health Needs Needs Health

55%

45%

80%

20%

83%

17%

67%

33%

Figure 7: Services to Children to Meet Their Educational, Physical Health and Mental Health Needs (Includes Children in Out-of-Home and In-Home Care)

Source: CSSP Quality Service Review conducted in September and October 2003

65%

35%

61%

39%

■ Area Needing Improvement

■ Strength

80% 69% 68% 67% Degree Outcome Achieved 70% 60% 50% 40% 33% 32% 31% 30% 20% 10% 0% Strength Area Needing Improvement ■ All Cases (N=38) 32% 68% 31% 69% ☐ Out-of-Home Case (N=32) 33% 67% ☐ In Home Care (N=6) Percent of Families

Figure 8: Assessing Needs and Matching Services to Needs for Children, Families and Foster Parents

Source: CSSP Quality Service Review conducted in September and October 2003

III. PLACEMENT OF CHILDREN

A. Key Implementation Strategies

1. Independent Assessment of the Placement Process

a. Requirements

The Implementation Plan required that CFSA obtain a comprehensive independent assessment of the placement process and Family Resource Units by expert consultants. This review was to consider the (a) structure of the placement process; (b) policies and procedures involved in making decisions about placement; (c) appropriate placement for children; and (d) appropriate supports provided to promote reunification and to ensure stability and well-being for children in placement. Upon completion of this review, CFSA, in consultation with the Monitor and Plaintiffs, was to develop and finalize action steps to address structure of the placement process, placement policies and procedures, the effectiveness and efficiency of placement supports and the placement decision making process, with timelines for implementing agreed upon strategies for inclusion in the Implementation Plan (Implementation Plan, Section VI, p 27).

b. Performance Benchmarks

By March 31, 2003, the consultant review will be completed and by June 30, 2003, the action steps will be developed.

c. Findings

CFSA sought out expert consultation as they began reforming the placement process. A review of the placement process was completed by the members of the Annie E. Casey Foundation's *Family to Family* Initiative during the spring of 2003. The final report from this assessment was provided to the Agency in early April.

After receiving and reviewing the assessment data from the Annie E. Casey Foundation, CFSA developed action steps to improve the placement process. These action steps were presented to the Monitor and were discussed with the Monitor and Plaintiffs on July 2, 2003. The action steps developed by CFSA were accepted by the Monitor for inclusion in the Implementation Plan.

Action steps to improve the placement process not previously included in the Implementation Plan that were added as a result of this work include:

- Implementing a placement structure that ensures a close linkage between recruitment of resource families and placement to support the placement of children in appropriately matched families rather than in congregate care. This placement structure would centralize accountability for placement under a senior level manager who reports to the principal deputy. (Beginning spring 2003 and on-going)
- Ensuring that all case hand-offs between workers (i.e., investigation to ongoing worker, CFSA to a private agency; transfers when workers change) occur in person. (Detailed strategy was to be developed by September 30, 2003)
- Moving to geographical assignment through the division of the District into two geographical areas and assignment of cases at investigation based on those areas. (Statistical analysis to include geo-mapping completed, proposal made and approved in June 2003)

While the Monitor believes there has been some progress in improving the placement process, there is still work to be done to improve how the placement process is structured and operates. This relates to both emergency and non-emergency placements and for placements transferred to and managed by the private agencies. Additionally, the Agency was to have provided information to the Monitor regarding its strategy for ensuring that all case hand-offs occur in person by the end of September⁹ (see action steps below).

-

⁹ Information related to case handoffs was provided to the Monitor on January 15, 2004.

The on-going work to implement team decision making/facilitated family team meetings prior to or immediately after a child's placement should continue to improve the placement process. The Monitor intends to closely assess the placement process during the next six months.

2. Revision of Foster Care Policy

a. Requirement

The <u>LaShawn</u> Implementation Plan requires that CFSA develop and implement a comprehensive foster care policy that includes the following components:

- Children will be placed with families first;
- Procedures to involve family, including extended family, in decisions about appropriate placement;
- Supports available to foster parents;
- Appropriate use of emergency and kinship placements;
- Requirements and procedures for sharing information with foster families, service providers and all who are involved in the case; and
- Expectations of the social worker, supervisor, case aide and foster parent(s).
- Children will be placed with siblings in the least restrictive, most family-like setting to meet individual needs and placed in close proximity to their homes and communities

(Implementation Plan, Section VI, p 27).

b. Performance Benchmarks

By September 30, 2003, the foster care policy will be developed (Implementation Plan, Section VI, p 28).

c. Findings

The Agency has not yet completed its development of the revised foster care policy. It has, however, begun an inclusive process that is actively working toward completion.

A primary workgroup was established in October 2002 to review and recommend changes to current policies and/or draft new foster care policies. In March 2003, working teams were established that report to the primary workgroup with information and recommendations regarding 14 substantive policy areas related to foster care (teen services, licensing foster homes, therapeutic foster care, placement services, etc.). Importantly, CFSA has included resource parents (foster parents) and community advocates on the primary workgroup and on the working teams. In addition, CFSA met with CSSP twice for consultation on policy development.

There are four elements to the policy that the Agency anticipates being complete by December 31, 2003. These include permanency planning and permanency goal setting for children, emergency kinship licensure, matching and placement of children with appropriate families, and relationship with resource parents. CSSP reviewed and provided

comments in September 2003 on the draft permanency planning and goal setting policy. The Agency has also submitted drafts to CSSP of the policies and procedures related to foster care matching, medically fragile foster children, proctor parents, and role of resource parents.

Additional data were provided to the Monitor on January 15, 2004 regarding the anticipated completion date of the full set of foster care policies. While it is clear that considerable work in this area has occurred, the Monitor believes that it needs to move to completion more quickly.

3. Developing After Hours Capacity to Serve Foster Parents/Families in Crisis Situations

a. <u>Requirement</u>

The Implementation Plan requires that CFSA develop an after hours capacity to service foster parents/families in crisis situations. (Implementation Plan, Section VI).

b. Performance Benchmarks

By September 30, 2003, an after hours capacity to service foster parents/families in crisis situations will be developed.

c. Findings

This after-hours support program was developed and implemented. For more information, please see the discussion in Section II, A.2., page 37.

B. Outcomes

1. Placement of Children with Their Siblings

a. Requirement

<u>LaShawn A. v. Williams</u> requires that children be placed with their siblings, to the extent that such placement is consistent with their individual needs (Modified Final Order, Section II, 5).

b. Performance Benchmarks

The <u>LaShawn</u> Implementation Plan requires that by June 30, 2003, 65% of children in out-of-home placement will be placed with some or all of their siblings (Implementation Plan, Section VI, 1.a).

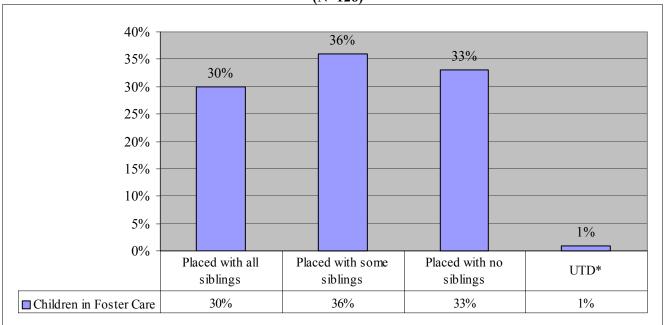
c. Source of Data

The data for this measure were derived from a case record review of a random sample of cases of children in foster care as of July 31, 2003. Of the 183 foster care cases reviewed, 57 cases were not applicable for this indicator because the child either had no siblings or had no siblings in foster care. The resulting sample included children in traditional foster care, independent living placements, treatment therapeutic foster care, residential treatment and traditional group home care, kinship care, and those awaiting adoption.

d. <u>Findings</u>

CFSA met the performance benchmark for the placement of one or more siblings together. As illustrated below in Figure 9, 38 children were placed with all of their siblings and 45 children were placed with some of their siblings. A total of 83 children (66%) were placed with all or some of their siblings. The remaining children include 41 children who were not placed with their siblings and two children where documentation was insufficient to allow reviewers to determine if the siblings were placed together. CFSA administrative data for July 2003 indicate that 64% of children are placed with some or all of their siblings.

Figure 9: Children in Foster Care Who Are Placed with One or More of Their Siblings (N=126)



Source: CSSP Case Record Review of children in foster care in July 2003, with siblings in care.

^{*}In two cases, the case documentation was insufficient for reviewers to be able to determine if the child was placed with his or her siblings.

2. Children Under 12 Placed in Congregate Care

a. Requirement

<u>LaShawn A. v. Williams</u> requires that no child under twelve shall be placed in a group care, non-foster home setting for more than 30 days unless the child has special treatment needs that cannot be met in a home-like setting and unless the setting has a program to treat the child's specific needs (Modified Final Order, Section VI, A.8).

b. Performance Benchmarks

The <u>LaShawn</u> Implementation Plan requires that by June 30, 2003, no more than 65 children under age 12 will be placed in congregate care settings for more than 30 days unless the child has special treatment needs that cannot be met in a home-like setting and unless the setting has a program to treat the child's specific needs (Implementation Plan, Section VI, 1.c).

c. Source of Data

The data for this measure were derived from administrative data provided by CFSA for the period between July 1, 2003 and July 31, 2003.

d. <u>Findings</u>

CFSA performance has exceeded the benchmark for this goal. As of July 2003, CFSA data shows 47 children under the age of 12 placed in congregate care for more than 30 days. This is wonderful progress on moving children to family settings. This compares with data from January 2003, at which time 70 children under 13 were in congregate care. See Figure 10 below for historical data on children under 12 placed in congregate care.

← Children <12 in Group Care 100 90 80 75 Number of Children 70 60 50 ◆ 47 40 *Sep 2002 data is 30 children 13 and 20 under in 10 congregate care. 0 Sep-02* Feb-03 Apr-03 Jul-03 Mar-03 May-03 Jun-03 Month

Figure 10: Children Under Age 12 in Congregate Care (September 2002 – July 2003)

Source: CFSA administrative data.

3. Sibling Visitation When Children are Apart

a. Requirement

The <u>LaShawn</u> Implementation Plan requires that children placed apart from their siblings will have at least twice monthly visitation with some or all of their siblings (Implementation Plan, Section VI, 1.d). This is extremely important to allow children in foster care to maintain healthy connections with their families.

b. Performance Benchmark

Neither the Agency nor the Monitor have previously tracked this benchmark. Therefore, the Implementation Plan required that by June 30, 2003, a baseline for performance will be established, allowing CFSA to better understand what needs to happen going forward (Implementation Plan, Section VI, 1.d).

c. Source of Data

The data for this measure were derived from a case record review of a random sample of all children placed in foster care as of July 31, 2003. Cases reviewers specifically examined the pattern of sibling visitation in the six-month period between January 31, 2003 and July 31, 2003. Of the 183 cases reviewed, visitation between the child and his/her siblings was feasible in 71 cases. Visits were not feasible for the remaining cases due to reasons such as, the child had no siblings, the child was placed with all of his or her siblings, or the child and/or the siblings were placed outside of the DC metropolitan area.

d. Findings

As Figure 11 on page 49 illustrates, during the six-month period of January 31, 2003 to July 31, 2003, children placed apart from their siblings are not routinely visiting with them. Almost half (46%) of children did not visit with their sibling(s) at all based on documentation in FACES. Only 3% of children visited with their siblings weekly or more. In 4% of cases, siblings visited with each other once or twice a month. Siblings visited sporadically in 16% of cases and in 13% of cases, the siblings saw each other once over the six-month period. In the remaining 18% of cases, the documentation was not sufficient for reviewers to be able to determine if visits occurred, or when visits did occur, it was impossible to determine their frequency. The small numbers in the sample mean that these are not statistically valid findings. However, they do provide a baseline for looking at this issue. The data suggest that much needs to be done in this area. CFSA is now collecting this information through FACES for all applicable children and will be able to monitor this monthly.

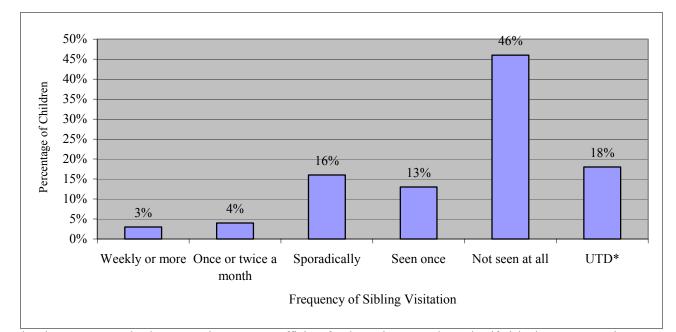


Figure 11: Sibling Visitation for Children Placed Apart (N=71)

Source: CSSP case record review of children in foster care during July 2003 with siblings placed apart.

4. Children Staying Overnight in Intake Processing Center

a. Requirement

The <u>LaShawn</u> Implementation Plan requires that CFSA will have no children stay overnight in its in-house Intake Center (Implementation Plan, Section VI, 1.e).

b. Performance Benchmarks

By June 30, 2003, and thereafter, CFSA will have no child under age 12 stay overnight in its in-house Intake Center.

c. Source of Data

The data for this measure were derived from administrative data provided by CFSA for the period between July 1, 2003 and July 31, 2003.

d. Findings

CFSA closed its in-house Intake Center in the beginning of 2003. Monthly data from CFSA indicate that no children under the age of 12 stayed overnight in the CFSA inhouse Intake Center in July 2003. This meets the performance standard and is an important accomplishment for children.

^{*}In the UTD cases, the documentation was not sufficient for the reviewers to determine if visitation was occurring or the frequency of visitation.

5. Children Placed More Than 100 Miles Outside the District

a. <u>Requirement</u>

<u>LaShawn A. v. Williams</u> requires that children in foster care be placed in the most family-like, least restrictive environment appropriate to their needs and as close to home and community as possible (Modified Final Order, Section VI, A.5). In addition, the Implementation Plan requires that CFSA will not place children more than 100 miles outside the District of Columbia except in exceptional circumstances when their needs can only be met in far-away treatment facilities (Implementation Plan, Section VI, 1.f).

b. Performance Benchmarks

Reducing placement more than 100 miles away requires developing additional treatment capacity closer to the District of Columbia. The benchmark established is that by June 30, 2003, CFSA will not place more than 60 children more than 100 miles outside the District.

c. Source of Data

The data for this measure were derived from administrative data provided by CFSA for the period between July 1, 2003 and July 31, 2003.

d. Findings

As of July 31, 2003, 64 children were placed in facilities more than 100 miles outside the District of Columbia. This is slightly above the performance measure of no more than 60 children placed outside the District of Columbia by four children. Table 10 below describes the placement of children in facilities more than 100 miles outside the District of Columbia over the past seven months. In May 2001, there were 83 children in this category and in May 2002, there were 65 children in this category. As of July 2003, there does not appear to be a particular trend in increasing or decreasing the number of children in this category since May 2002. Additional and sustained attention is needed to identify and/or create resources with capacity to serve these children closer to home.

Table 10: Children in Residential Treatment Facilities More than 100 Miles from DC (January 2003 – July 2003)					
Month	Number of Children				
January	60				
February	56				
March	62				
April	62				
May	59				
June	63				
July	64				

Source: CFSA administrative data.

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¹⁰ CFSA reports that by September 30, 2003, 55 children were placed 100 miles or more from the District of Columbia.

6. Exploration of Relative Resources for Placement of Children

a. <u>Requirement</u>

<u>LaShawn A. v. Williams</u> requires that wherever possible and appropriate, children shall be placed with approved relatives (MFO, Section VI, A.6).

CFSA policy and practice requires the investigation of relative resources in cases requiring removal of children from their homes (Implementation Plan, Section VI, 1.g).

b. Performance Benchmark

By June 30, 2003, CFSA will investigate relative resources in 50% of cases requiring removal of children from their homes (Implementation Plan, Section VI, 1.g)

c. Source of Data

The data for this measure were to be derived from a case record review of all children removed from their homes in July 2003. The Monitor reviewed the case records of all of the 106 children whom CFSA identified as newly placed or replaced during July. On the basis of that review, the Monitor has concerns about the accuracy of the list of children. For approximately half of the children, there was clear evidence that the child had been removed from home or had experienced a replacement during the month of July. For the remaining half, however, the Monitor could find no evidence in the contact notes or other documentation that the child had experienced a placement move. Additionally, other administrative data (such as the number of placement disruptions during the month of July) do not appear to be aligned with the above mentioned list of children who moved in July. As a result, the list of children was sent back to CFSA for analysis and additional information.

The Agency reports that this placement data included:

- children who were moved from a "third party" placement designation to a foster care placement designation,
- children who were out of their foster home for a 48 hour or more period and then returned to the same foster home (respite, incarceration, etc), and
- children whose "service level" changed (classification for the provider payment).

While the Agency indicates that the first two categories of children represent a legitimate "entry into foster care" as defined in federal regulation, the inclusion of any of these children in a list of children who were removed or replaced in July is concerning. The placement data the Agency uses to make decisions about allocation of resources and to measure specific outcomes needs to accurately reflect the experience of children. For example, the Monitor (and CFSA by extension) is unable to use these placement data to determine several Implementation benchmarks including which children should (a) receive weekly visits during the first eight weeks in a new placement, (b) receive a health screening prior to being moved to a new placement, and (c) whether or not relative resources were explored prior to placement. Additionally, the Agency has been using

these data to plan for facilitated Family Team Meetings (i.e., how many placement disruptions should they expect during a month's time), which significantly over-represents the capacity they will need to do the facilitated Family Team Meetings.

The Monitor believes the Agency should take immediate steps to make the data on placements reflective of each child's experience in care and, therefore, usable and meaningful for planning.

d. <u>Findings</u>

Unable to determine; see above.

7. Improving Stability: Reducing Multiple Placements for Children in Foster Care

Multiple placements for children compound the trauma and disruptions of children's healthy development that frequently results from the need for foster care placement.

a. Requirements

The <u>LaShawn</u> Order and federal and other outcomes for good child welfare practice all require reducing the numbers of children in foster care who have multiple placements (MFO, Section X, D.b). There will be a reduction in the percentage of children who enter foster care after January 1, 2003 who have had three or more placements (Implementation Plan, VI, 2).

b. Performance Benchmarks

By June 30, 2003, no more than 10% of children in foster care will have had three or more placements in the previous 12 months (Implementation Plan, Section VI, 2.b).

The Implementation Plan requires CFSA and the Court Monitor to establish a methodology for measuring multiple placements. Given the historical failures of the District's child welfare system, there remain many children who have been in foster care for many years and who have experienced multiple placements. In an effort to focus on current practice, the measure used to date is a reduction in the percentage of children in foster care who have had three or more placements in the previous 12-month period. The Monitor expects that beginning in 2004, CFSA will also begin to collect and analyze data by cohorts of children entering care. This will allow an assessment in the future of the placement history of children entering care in a given year.

c. Source of Data

The data for this measure were derived from a case record review of a random sample of all children in foster care as of July 31, 2003. The number of placements was determined for a child's most recent continuous episode in foster care.

d. Findings

Figure 12 on page 53 depicts the number of different placements for all children in foster care over the past year from August 1, 2002 through July 31, 2003. Of the 183 cases reviewed, 167 children (92%) have had one or two placements during the 12-month

period. Fourteen children (8%) have had three or more placements. Of these children, eleven have had three placements, one had four placements; and two had five placements. This is a very encouraging finding and means that CFSA exceeded the performance benchmark for multiple placements.

The Monitor also looked separately at those children in this sample who had been in out-of-home care less than twelve months. Of the 29 children who have been in care less than twelve months, almost half (48%) have had only one placement but 10% have had two placements and 42% had experienced three placements. This suggests that much more needs to be done to make good decisions on the <u>first</u> placement for children.

80% 69% 70% 60% 50% 40% 23% 30% 20% 6% 10% 1% 1% 0% 1 Placement 2 Placements 3 Placements 4 Placements 5 Placements

Figure 12: Number of Placements for All Children in Foster Care in the Previous 12 Months (N=183)

Source: CSSP case record review of children in foster care in July 2003.

8. Licensure of Foster Homes and Group Placements

a. Requirements

<u>LaShawn A. v. Williams</u> requires that children will be placed in a facility—foster home, group home, institution, consortium, or other facility—that has a valid and current license (Modified Final Order, Section VI, F and Implementation Plan, Section V.3).

b. Performance Benchmarks

By June 30, 2003, 80% of foster homes, group homes, and independent living facilities will have a current and valid license (Implementation Plan, Section VI, 3.a).

c. Source of Data

Data for this measure were derived from a random sample of 172 of all foster homes as of July 2003 and the entire universe of group homes and independent living facilities as of July 2003. CFSA provided copies of valid foster home licenses for foster homes in the sample as well as group home and independent living facility licenses. Additionally, administrative data regarding licensure were reviewed.

Foster home licenses were considered valid if families were licensed for the entire month of July 2003 or if a family were licensed prior to the entry of child(ren) into the home during the month of July 2003. For example, a foster home license was considered valid if it were issued on July 15 and children did not enter that home until July 16. Conversely, if a foster home license were dated July 15 and foster children resided in the home prior to July 15, the license was not considered.

d. Findings

Foster Home Licenses – CFSA did not meet the benchmark of having 80% of foster homes licensed. Documentation of a current foster home license was provided for 97 homes (56%). Eight homes (5%) were licensed only for a portion of July even though children were placed in the homes when the license was not valid. Twenty-three homes (13%) had out of date licenses, and no license was provided for 44 homes (26%). This does not meet the established performance benchmark.

CFSA administrative data indicate 63% of foster homes with children placed during July 2003 were licensed.

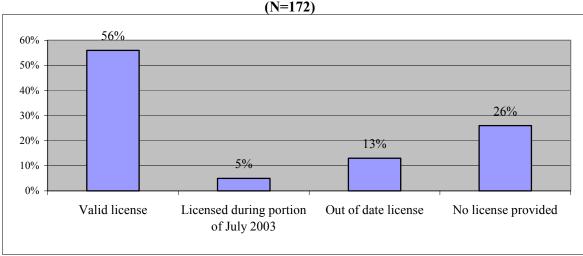


Figure 13: Children Placed in Foster Homes with Valid Licenses as of July 31, 2003
(N=172)

Source: CSSP review of licenses provided for a sample of homes in which children were placed during July 2003.

Youth Residential Facilities and Independent Living Facilities – For the first time, the Agency has licensed all youth residential and independent living facilities. This is a tremendous accomplishment and was an unattained goal for many years. The Agency has taken a significant step forward in promoting the safety and well-being of children placed in facilities, which now must meet specific standards of care.

There are 22 licensed "youth residential facilities" with 64 individual homes. Of these 22, two facilities were licensed during the entire month of July 2003. The Agency provided licenses that began July 31, 2003 for 18 facilities. The remaining two facilities (Little

Blue House and Chi Child Care Center) are in fact licensed but the Agency has not provided a copy of those licenses to the Monitor. All of the youth residential facilities have been licensed by CFSA.

There are six "independent living facilities" that maintain homes and apartments for older adolescents and young adults and all of them have been licensed by CFSA. Of these six facilities, one was licensed for the entire month of July 2003. The Agency provided licenses that began July 31, 2003 for 4 facilities. The remaining facility (Jones Independent Living Facility) has been licensed but the Agency has not provided a copy of that license to the Monitor.

9. Capacity Limitation for Group Homes

a. Requirements

The <u>LaShawn A. v. Williams</u> MFO and Implementation Plan require that no child be placed in a group-care setting with a capacity in excess of 8 children without express written approval by the Director or designee based on written documentation that the child's needs can be met only in that specific facility, including a description of the services available in the facility to address the individual child's needs (Implementation Plan, Section VI, 3.e).

b. Performance Benchmarks

CFSA has never routinely tracked this indicator. Thus, the Implementation Plan required that by June 30, 2003, the baseline performance will be established (Implementation Plan, Section VI, 3.e).

c. Source of Data

The data for this measure were derived from administrative data provided by CFSA from a list of all group homes and their census on July 31, 2003.

d. Findings

As of July 31, 2003, 114 (37%) of 312 children placed in group-care settings were placed in group-care settings with more than eight children. This sets the baseline performance for children in group homes that exceed <u>LaShawn</u> limitations. CFSA is taking steps to address this issue in the new RFP for congregate care and the new contracts that will be negotiated in response to that RFP. Providers will be required to meet the capacity limitations under those contracts. Further, CFSA is not placing children in group care settings that exceed eight without the express written approval of the Director of the Deputy Director for the Office of Licensing and Monitoring.

10. Capacity Limitation for Foster Homes

a. Requirements

<u>LaShawn A. v. Williams</u> requires that no child shall be placed in a foster home if that placement will result in more than three foster children in that foster home, or a total or

six children, including the foster family's natural children; more than two children under two years of age; or more than three children under six years of age.

The only exception to these limits are instances in which the placement of a sibling group in a foster home with no other children in the home would exceed the limits. In such instances, the placement limits will not preclude the placement of the sibling group together. (MFO, Section VI.A.a. and Implementation Plan, Section VI, 3.f).

b. Performance Benchmarks

By June 30, 2003, the baseline will be established. In addition, no new placements after June 30, 2003 shall be in foster homes or facilities in excess of its licensed capacity, with the exception of sibling groups (Implementation Plan, Section VI, 3.f).

c. Source of Data

The data on this measure were derived from administrative data provided by CFSA as of July 2003.

d. <u>Findings</u>

As of July 31, 2003, 155 (6%) of 2451 total children placed in foster homes were placed in homes with more than three (3) foster children. No data were provided on the total numbers of children (foster or non-foster) in applicable homes. The Monitor needs to determine a methodology with CFSA for collecting this information. The relatively low number of foster children placed in excess of the licensing requirement for three children is a very positive finding, especially since the District's licensing standard is relatively stringent.

11. Medical Screening Prior to Foster Care Placement

a. <u>Requirements</u>

<u>LaShawn A. v. Williams</u> requires that all children will receive a medical screening prior to placement (Implementation Plan, Section VI, 4).

b. Performance Benchmarks

By June 30, 2003, 50% of children in foster care will have a health screening prior to placement (Implementation Plan, Section VI, 4).

c. Source of Data

The data for this measure were derived from a case record review of a random sample of all children placed or replaced in homes in July 2003. Please see discussion of the Monitor's concerns about the identification of all children placed or replaced in July 2003 in Section IV.B.6, page 50.

d. Findings

Unable to determine.

IV. PLANNING

A. <u>Key Implementation Strategies</u>

1. Revision to Case Planning Policies and Procedures

a. Requirement

The <u>LaShawn</u> Implementation Plan required that CFSA revise and implement policies and procedures on case planning to incorporate MFO requirements, permanency time frames in District law and the participation of youth, parents, families, informal supports, foster parents where applicable, and other service providers (Implementation Plan, Section VII, p 35).

b. Performance Benchmark

By September 30, 2003, the policies and procedures on case planning will be revised.

c. Findings

The Agency has not yet completed revisions to the case planning policies. It is anticipated that CFSA will complete this work by December 31, 2003.

2. Clarification of Contract Agencies Case Planning Responsibilities

a. Requirement

CFSA will revise and implement policies and procedures that clarify case planning responsibilities when contract agencies are involved (Implementation Plan, Section VII, p 35).

b. Performance Benchmarks

By June 30, 2003, case planning policies will be revised and by September 30, 2003, case planning policies will be implemented.

c. Findings

As noted, the case planning policy is in process and has not yet been fully developed. However, CFSA has been working to clarify case planning responsibilities in the private agencies through its contracting process. This work is occurring in two ways. First, as each private agency contract expires and is up for reconsideration, CFSA is amending the new contracts to include the revised case planning expectations.

Second, the Requests for Proposals (RFPs) that CFSA released further clarify the specific expectations related to both case planning and case management responsibilities when private agencies are involved with children and families. CSSP reviewed and provided extensive comments on the RFPs specifically as they relate to case management responsibilities. The recommended changes from CSSP's review were generally incorporated into the RFPs before they were released for bid.

3. Developing a Quality Assurance Protocol on Case Planning

a. <u>Requirement</u>

The Implementation Plan requires CFSA to develop and begin utilizing on a regular basis a quality assurance protocol to facilitate case plans that are timely, comprehensive, individualized, needs based, and current.

b. Performance Benchmarks

By September 30, 2003, the quality assurance protocol will be developed.

c. Findings

CFSA has developed a quality assurance protocol for assessing case planning in foster care cases. The quality assurance protocol primarily utilizes the new Administrative Review process to ensure quality case plan development. All children in out-of-home care are required to have an administrative review within the first 180 days of the child's entry into CFSA custody and every 180 days thereafter. This process now includes a preadministrative review of all case documentation by a quality assurance staff member at least three weeks prior to the administrative review. The QA staff use a structured and comprehensive tool to ensure case worker compliance with timeliness and quality expectations of the case plan. The pre-administrative review is currently being implemented on a phase-in basis with full implementation expected by April 30, 2004.

CFSA has not yet developed a quality assurance protocol for assessing the case plans for in-home family services cases. Several options are currently being explored and will be shared with the Monitor in the quality assurance plan, which is due December 31, 2003. Among the strategies CFSA would like to use will be the Quality Service Reviews.

Importantly, the Agency has begun developing case plans more regularly as noted in the outcome data. The information system tracks the timely completion of case plans monthly by program area and program manager. The quality of case planning at the Agency, however, remains an area where much improvement and quality assurance is needed. The recent qualitative review of case plans found a number of areas where quality assurance activities related to case planning will be critical:

- Reviewers in the qualitative review found that in many cases, there is no clear single point of responsibility for developing a coherent plan, coordinating service delivery and tracking progress toward commonly understood and agreed-upon safety, permanency and well-being goals.
- There is an inattention to the underlying needs of children and families and a lack of a functional assessment to drive case planning and service delivery.
- There is too often a lack of participation by families (including extended family), children, provider agency staff, and informal supports in comprehensive case planning assessment, particularly for out-of-home cases.

• Particularly notable was a lack of adequate planning around key transition points in the life of a case, including reunification, completion of substance abuse treatment, case closure, and adoption.

4. Engaging Families in Case Planning

a. Requirements

The <u>LaShawn</u> Implementation Plan requires that CFSA will develop a process for meeting with the family as soon as possible but no later than within seven days to initiate planning whenever a child is removed from the home. This could include mediation, Team Decision Making, or some other family meeting format that accomplishes the same objectives (Implementation Plan, Section VII, p 35).

b. <u>Performance Benchmarks</u>

By September 30, 2003, a process for meeting with the family will be developed.

c. Findings

During the summer of 2003, CFSA committed to a process for using facilitated family team meeting with families based on the *Family to Family* model of Team Decision Making. In this model, family meetings are convened whenever a child may be or is removed from home or a child's placement changes or may change.

This process represents a significant positive shift in the direction of the Agency's philosophical approach to working with families by genuinely including them in the decision making and planning process. The Agency has effectively engaged a wide cast of stakeholders (Family Court, Collaboratives, private agencies, resource parents) in the development process to ensure its success. Four internal workgroups have also been meeting since August 2003 to fully develop and implement the facilitated family team meetings by September 30, 2004.

In addition, a variety of facilitated family meetings are currently occurring throughout the District's child welfare system. These include case planning conferences, placement disruption staffing, Multi-Agency Planning Team (MAPT) staffing, family group conferences (Collaboratives and CFSA), emergency assessment program family meetings (Collaboratives) and Family Court Mediation (DC Superior Court). These meetings vary widely in approach and in the consistency of family involvement. Part of the task for the facilitated family team meeting workgroups is to consider the successes and lessons from these meetings and propose modifications to the system as a whole related to family meetings in order to ensure a seamless process that will result in better outcomes for children and families.

5. Providing Clinical Expertise in Case Planning

a. <u>Requirements</u>

The Implementation Plan requires CFSA to develop and implement policies and procedures identifying those situations in which clinical expertise will be made available in the case planning process as needed to protect a child's safety, permanency, and well-being (Implementation Plan, Section VII, p 35).

b. Performance Benchmarks

By September 30, 2003, the policies will be developed.

c. Findings

The Agency has made impressive strides in developing plans for and providing clinical expertise within the Agency. The Office of Clinical Practice has been created and now includes a psychologist, physician, nurses and social workers who are responsible for providing specialized services and supports to children and families and consultation to case managers throughout CFSA and the private agencies.

Office of Clinical Practice staff are available for consultation and assistance on a wide array of substantive areas including domestic violence, substance abuse, physical health care, mental health and behavioral care, and education. Clinical Practice staff assist in identifying and accessing available services as well as plan interventions that enhance the safety, permanency and well-being of children and families.

In additional to providing these direct supports to children, families and case workers, the Office of Clinical Practice is providing the leadership on several important Agency-wide initiatives. These include the development of a facilitated family team meeting process and the new administrative review process.

6. Community Sites for Parent and Child Visitation

a. Requirement

As one of several strategies to improve parental and sibling visitation, the Implementation Plan requires CFSA to incorporate into new contracts the requirement that contractors will have capacity for community sites for parental visitation (Implementation Plan, Section VII, p 35). In addition, CFSA is to develop additional community sites to facilitate both supervised and unsupervised visits.

b. Performance Benchmarks

By September 30, 2003, new contracts will incorporate the requirement for community sites for parental visitation and the implementation of community sites to facilitate parental visitation will begin.

c. <u>Findings</u>

Beginning on October 1, 2003, all of the Healthy Family/Thriving Communities Collaboratives entered into contractual agreement with CFSA to provide community sites for parental visitation. All of the Collaboratives have visitation space available and are accepting referrals from CFSA for child and parent visits. While the actual use of this important new resource by CFSA social workers has gotten off to a slow start with some Collaboratives having as few as one parent-child visit and others having as many as 20 visits, it is hoped that the Agency will make full use its availability to ensure families have easy access to visitation with their children.

B. Outcomes

1. Current Case Planning

a. <u>Requirement</u>

<u>LaShawn A. v. Williams</u> requires that within 30 days of a child entering foster care, the worker shall develop with the child's parent(s), if possible, a written case plan for the child and family (Modified Final Order, Section VII, B.4). The Implementation Plan further explicated that all open cases will have case plans as defined in the following criteria: (a) will be created within the first 30 days of a child's removal from home, (b) will be updated to reflect changing needs, and (c) will be updated minimally every six months (Implementation Plan, Section VII, 1).

b. Performance Benchmarks

By June 30, 2003, 60% of case plans will be current (Implementation Plan, Section VII, 1.c).

c. Source of Data

Data for this measure were derived from two separate random samples: (1) all open cases (including both in-home and out-of-home care cases) as of July 31, 2003 and (2) children in foster care during July 2003. In the all open cases sample, the Monitor accepted either family case plans or child specific case plans as evidence of case planning for this measure. In the foster care sample, the Monitor looked only for child specific case plans because the Agency has implemented a policy requiring workers to develop child specific case plans for children in out-of-home care. Case plans in all samples were counted only if they were entered into FACES and approved by a supervisor.

d. <u>Findings</u>

CFSA met the performance benchmark for case planning. In the sample of 185 of all open cases, 112 cases (61%) had current case plans. Forty-six cases (25%) had case plans that were not current (dated prior to January 31, 2003) and 27 cases (14%) had no case plan. In the foster care sample of 170, 104 children (61%) had current child specific case plans. Thirty children (18%) had case plans that were not current (dated prior to January 31, 2003) and 36 children (21%) had no case plan. Both of the samples met the established performance benchmark (see Figure 14).

Data regarding the historical trend in CFSA performance on case planning can be found in Figure 15. These administrative data from CFSA show a trending upwards of current case plans during much of the year between January 2003 and May 2003 with slight decrease in the number of foster care case plans in June and July 2003. The Agency has put forth significant effort to increase the number of case plans. Continued attention in this area will be needed to sustain the progress while the Agency focuses on engaging families in case planning and the quality of case plans.

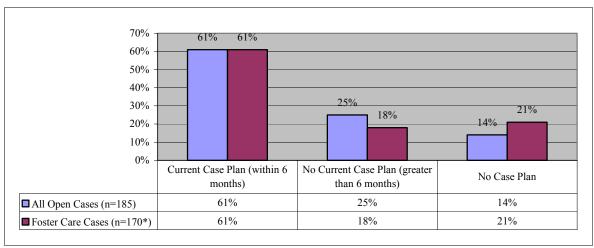


Figure 14: Current Case Plans: All Open Cases and Foster Care Cases

Source: CSSP Case Record Review.

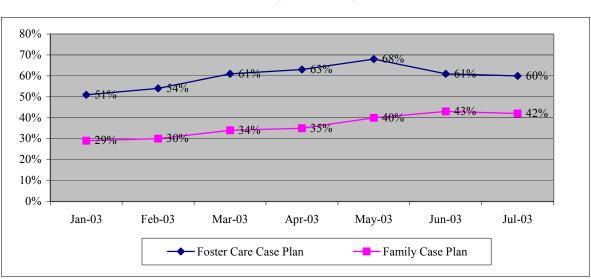


Figure 15: Administrative Data from CFSA
Case Plans: Children in Foster Care More Than 30 Days and Family Case Plans
January 2003 – July 2003

Source: CFSA administrative data.

^{*}Excludes 13 children who have been in foster care less than six months.

V. ADOPTION AND POST ADOPTION SERVICES

A. <u>Key Implementation Strategies</u>

1. Strategy to Facilitate Adoption for Children in Foster Care with a Goal of Adoption

a. Requirement

The Implementation Plan requires that CSFA develop and implement intensive action to facilitate adoption for children currently in foster care placement with a goal of adoption (Implementation Plan, Section VIII, p 40). This includes:

- Clarifying the policy expectations for adoption planning of children in placement consistent with MFO requirements and providing training to all staff regarding these expectations.
- Completing work to identify all children with a goal of adoption for whom there is no currently identified adoptive resource.
- Convening permanency planning team meetings to provide for review of children with a goal of adoption and the development of a child-specific recruitment plan, if needed, for any child who has no adoptive resource identified within 95 days of the establishment of the adoption goal.
- For those children with an adoptive resource but no finalization, CFSA is to develop a child specific plan, take all reasonable steps to move the adoption to finalization, and review progress on each child every 60 days.

b. Performance Benchmarks

By March 31, 2003 and ongoing, CFSA will complete the identification of all children with a goal of adoption for whom there is no currently identified adoptive resource.

Beginning June 30, 2003, CFSA will convene a permanency planning team meeting to provide for the review of children with a goal of adoption and the development of child specific plans.

By September 30, 2003, for those children with an adoptive resource but no finalization, CFSA will develop a child specific plan and take all reasonable steps to move the adoption to finalization and review progress on children every 60 days.

By September 30, 2003, CFSA will clarify in policy the expectations for adoption planning of children and provide training to all staff.

c. Findings

Overall, the Monitor has expressed concern for some time that the pace of reforms to the adoption practices at CFSA is too slow, particularly as it relates to identifying adoptive resources for children with a goal of adoption and no identified resource. Far too many children continue to have no identified adoption resource. As of September 30, 2003, CFSA reported to the Monitor that there were 1,127 children with a goal of adoption and 413 (37%) of these children do not have an adoptive resource currently identified. Of these 413 children, 266 are case managed by CFSA and 147 are managed by the private agencies. These data are slightly different from the FACES administrative data report for September 30, 2003, which shows 1107 children with a goal of adoption (see Figure 16). Of those children, 552 (50%) are identified as being in pre-adoptive homes. An additional 97 children (9%) are in kinship homes. ¹¹

500 50% 450 400 350 Number of Children 300 250 18% 17% 200 9% 150 4% 2% 100 50 0 Specialized Traditional Therapeutic Kinship Other Homes Pre-Adoptive Infant Care Foster Care Foster Care Homes 50% Homes 9% 4% 2% 18% 17% CFSA 92 20 90 64 39 446 123 7 5 1 114 106 ■ Private Agencies Placement Type

Figure 16: Placement of Children with Goal of Adoption as of September 30, 2003 Total Children with Goal of Adoption – (n=1107)

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Source: CFSA administrative data.

¹¹ As previously discussed, small data discrepancies are generally related to the different times that reports are generated in FACES as workers are constantly making changes to the live database to update the status of children.

While not an outcome in the Implementation Plan, the Adoption and Safe Families Act requires that there be legal action to free children for adoption when they have been in foster care for 15 of the last 22 months or less. Eighty-one percent (81%) of the children in the foster care sample have been in care for at least 15 months (see Figure 17).

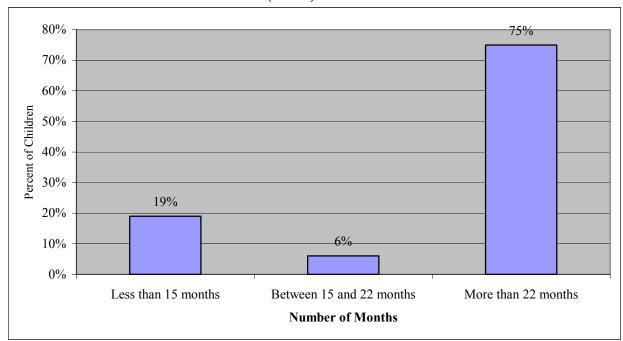


Figure 17: Length of Stay in Foster Care for Children in Care During July 2003 (n=183)

Source: CSSP record review of children in foster care in July 2003.

There were 315 finalized adoptions during FY03 (up from 265 in FY02). CFSA currently has only one recruitment unit in place, which addresses both foster care and adoption needs. As a result of the lack of capacity to move the adoption process forward and other factors, CFSA continues to struggle with developing child specific recruitment plans for those children who do not have an identified adoption resource. In 2004, the Agency plans to add one additional recruitment unit in an effort to build capacity.

CFSA has not completed its work on developing policy that clarifies the expectations for adoption planning. Working drafts of the adoption services policy and the permanency planning policy have been developed and the Monitor has reviewed and commented on the draft permanency planning policy. The adoption services policy was drafted with a broad array of stakeholders including foster parents and with some input from CSSP.

To address concerns about the pace of progress in reducing the numbers of children awaiting adoption, CFSA has engaged expert consultation regarding their adoption process. Sarah Greenblatt of Casey Family Services, a national expert in adoption, has begun assisting CFSA in assessing current adoption practices and has made recommendations for immediate steps needed to continue reforming adoption practices. The Monitor supports the Agency in their decision to seek this consultation and expects that they will move forward with Ms. Greenblatt's help to implement the recommendations.

Despite the Monitor's ongoing and serious concerns, there are several areas where the Agency has taken steps to improve adoption practices:

- CFSA, in collaboration with the Family Court, has developed a Court calendar tracking system and a case-tracking log for all those children who have an adoptive resource but do not have a finalized adoption. CFSA reviews the data regularly to ensure workers are aware of court hearings and report due dates. Weekly supervision with case managers now includes a review of how the adoption process is moving forward and ensuring that specific items (i.e. referrals to ICPC, subsidy, home studies) proceed within the needed time frames.
- Permanency planning staffing began December 1, 2003. The Implementation
 Plan requires that all children needing adoptive family recruitment will
 receive a permanency planning team meeting within 95 days of the goal of
 becoming adopted. CFSA has plans to convene four permanency planning
 teams, which are capable of staffing 40 cases a month. With this level of
 resource, the Agency anticipates it will take approximately nine months to
 staff the backlog of children who have a goal of adoption but no adoptive
 resource.
- CFSA is focusing more effort on legally freeing children for adoption. Over 140 Termination of Parental Rights (TPRs) petitions have been filed in Court since October 1, 2002. This is the first time that the District's child welfare agency has begun seeking terminations of parental rights for children needing adoption. This activity is required by federal law under the Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA) and needs to be continued and accelerated for all children for whom it is appropriate.
- 2. Additional Resources for Adoption Recruitment and Support Efforts

a. Requirements

The Implementation Plan requires that CFSA provide resources, both staffing and financial, to its adoption recruitment and support efforts.

b. Performance Benchmarks

Before September 30, 2003, CFSA will identify the staff and other resources to be allocated to adoptive home recruitment and support in FYs 04 and 05.

c. Findings

The Agency began identifying and utilizing a number of adoptive home recruitment and support resources during FY03. These strategies will continue into FY04. The strategies identified by CFSA include:

• Financial strategies

CFSA is working with the Mayor's office to try and extend current federal resources that support home studies, legal vouchers for adoptive parents, flexible funds for adoptive parents, the Adoption Resource Center, and the Mayor's Scholarship Fund. CFSA is also applying for additional monies from private foundations to support their adoption recruitment efforts. The Agency also indicated that it was considering reallocating funds within the FY04 budget to pilot contracts with vendors who can do specialized recruitment.

Marketing strategies

Two national adoption registries are being used – Adopt Us Kids and the National Adoption Exchange – to recruit adoptive parents from across the country. Wednesday's Child, a television-based recruitment resource supported by the Freddie Mac Foundation, is used to showcase individual children to TV viewers in the metropolitan DC area.

Consultation strategies

As noted previously, CFSA is actively receiving consultation services from national adoption and recruitment experts at Casey Family Services and from the Annie E. Casey Foundation.

Staffing strategies

The Agency is currently staffing one recruitment unit that serves both adoption and foster care recruitment needs. The Agency has determined that this staffing level is inadequate and is planning to staff a second foster home/adoptive home adoption recruitment unit beginning spring 2004.

• Targeted recruitment strategies

The Council for Excellence in Government has helped the Agency to develop technological supports that include a geographical database of faith-based organizations to enhance targeted recruitment. The Agency hopes to continue its relationship with the Council during FY04 to develop web-based information and application forms for community members that are interested in becoming adoptive parents. Additionally, the Agency plans to review and use the demographic data regarding the children who have a goal of adoption to target its recruitment efforts.

The FY05 budget is expected to reflect additional resources for adoption based on CFSA's assessment of the success of current strategies. The Monitor believes it is essential that there should be enhanced resources to support adoptive home recruitment. An adequate pool of flexible funds (previously available under a special federal adoption incentive appropriation) must continue to be available and accessible for families and workers. It is the Monitor's expectation that the Agency will provide additional resources for this work through reallocation or new authority in the second half of FY04 and through its FY05 budget. The Monitor will continue to assess the effectiveness of these strategies over the next year.

3. Adoptive Resource Center

a. Requirement

CFSA will complete the contracting process for the Adoption Resource Center.

b. Performance Benchmark

By April 30, 2003, CFSA will complete the contracting process.

c. Findings

The impetus for an Adoption Resource Center was provided by the continued advocacy and support from the Mayor's Committee on Permanent Families for Children. In response to an RFP, CFSA awarded a contract to Family and Child Services, Inc. in September 2003 to provide post-adoption services. A new Adoptive Resource Center was opened on September 2, 2003 and is expected to provide services for any child or family who either live in the District of Columbia or had an adoption finalized in the District of Columbia, as well as children in foster care with the goal of adoption. This overall population includes:

- 1. Children who have been adopted.
- 2. Families who have adopted children.
- 3. Children awaiting adoptive placement.
- 4. Families awaiting finalization of the adoption process.
- 5. Families needing post finalization support.
- 6. Families who are interested in adopting children in the District of Columbia.

The specific services that are to be offered by the Adoption Resource Center include: (a) information and referral, (b) crisis help line, (c) face-to-face counseling, (d) group meetings, (e) adoption and reunion information, (f) provision of a reference library, and (g) training programs.

The Adoption Resource Center was opened on September 2, 2003 through a two year contract with Family and Child Services, Inc. The Center is located at 1004 6th Street, NW (202-289-1057; www.adoptionresourcecenterdc.org). The mission of the Adoption Resource Center is to "empower and support children, youth, parents, families, and professionals in the D. C. adoption community by providing innovative services,

facilitating collaboration, and by promoting education, advocacy, and awareness of adoption related issues."

The Center is staffed with by a director, an intake social worker, a family support worker and an administrative assistant. The Center expects to hire an additional family support worker as well. Solution focused brief counseling and support groups for both children and adoptive parents are expected to be available. In addition, a crisis line is available 24 hours a day for families. A resource library has been created and a variety of training is available to parents and professionals regarding the adoption process.

While the Adoption Resource Center officially opened in September, it has not yet formally announced its availability widely. Approximately twelve families have accessed the Center since its opening in September. The Center is holding a "grand opening" on January 27, 2004 and expects to begin to receive more referrals from CFSA, the private agencies and the community. Under the original plan for creating an Adoption Resource Center, the Mayor's Committee on Permanent Families for Children was to maintain an advisory/oversight role. The Monitor supports a continued advisory role for the Mayor's Committee so that the Adoption Resource Center can continue to reflect broad stakeholder agreement on needs and services.

B. Outcomes

1. Timely Approval of Resource Parents (Foster and Adoptive Parents)

a. <u>Requirements</u>

<u>LaShawn A. v. Williams</u> requires the development and operation of an adoption recruitment program by CFSA, which includes both general and child-specific recruitment. CFSA is expected to have a process for recruiting, studying, and approving families interested in becoming foster or adoptive parents that results in the necessary training, home studies, and decisions on approval being completed within 120 days of application (Implementation Plan, Section VIII, 3).

b. Performance Benchmarks

By June 30, 2003, decisions will be made in 120 days for 50% of foster and adoptive applicants (Implementation Plan, Section VIII, 3).

c. Source of Data

CFSA initially provided the Monitor a chart of the 67 prospective foster and adoptive resource parents that attended orientation in June 2003. This chart contained information regarding the date of orientation, the training start date, the training end date, the name of the assigned social worker/recruiter and the status of the parents in training. This information, however, did not include any licensure dates. The Monitor requested additional data on December 4, 2003 but has not received any follow-up information from the Agency regarding the timely approval of resource parents.

d. Findings

The Monitor attempted to assess whether families interested in becoming foster and adoptive families were approved within 120 days as required by the MFO and Implementation Plan. Table 11 describes the data provided by CFSA. The data do not answer the question of whether the 17 families who completed training were approved and licensed within 120 days. The data do raise significant questions about the overwhelming number of families attending orientation who do not complete training. Efforts need to be made to look closely at the experiences of this population in order to improve the effectiveness of resources devoted to recruitment, training and approval of resource parents.

Table 11: Experience of Families Attending Foster/Adoptive Parent Orientation in June 2003						
	Attended Orientation in 6/03	Withdrew Before or During Training	Had Not Begun Training as of 9/15/03	Still in Training as of 9/03	Other*	Completed Training
Number of Resource Parents	67	39	5	1	5	17

^{*}Other includes families that were referred to other agencies for training, had scheduling conflicts, did not meet the criteria for becoming a resource parent and were screened out at orientation.

Source: CFSA

2. Post Adoption Services

a. Requirements

<u>LaShawn A. v. Williams</u> requires that all services necessary to preserve families shall be available to adoptive families, both prior to and subsequent to the finalization of the adoption (Modified Final Order, Section VIII, G.2).

The Implementation Plan requires CFSA to make available post-adoption services necessary to preserve families who have adopted a child from CFSA or from a contract agency providing adoption services to children committed to CFSA (Implementation Plan, Section VIII, 4).

b. Performance Benchmark

Prior to the recently approved Implementation Plan, little information was collected on the availability and use of post-adoption services. The Implementation Plan required that a baseline be established by June 30, 2003 (Implementation Plan, Section VIII, 4).

c. Source of Data

The Monitor does not yet have a baseline for this outcome. CFSA has only recently begun providing post-adoptive services. The Monitor and CFSA need to do more work to figure out how to accurately assess the demand for services and support the Agency's responsiveness and capacity to meet that demand.

VI. SUPERVISION OF PLACEMENT

A. <u>Key Implementation Strategies</u>

1. Social Work Visitation of Children in Placement

a. <u>Requirements</u>

CFSA will clarify in policy the expectations for social work visitation of children in placement consistent with MFO requirements and provide training to all staff regarding these expectations (Implementation Plan, Section IX, p 44).

b. Performance Benchmarks

By September 30, 2003, the policy regarding social worker visitation to children in placement will be clarified.

c. Findings

The Agency has begun tracking in FACES by area and program manager the frequency of visitation to children in placement to better understand visitation patterns and to develop corrective action to increase visitation to meet the Implementation Plan benchmarks. The Monitor, however, has not received revised Agency policy related to social worker visitation and expects it will be included as part of the foster care policy that the Agency is currently developing.

2. Performance-Based Contracts

a. Implementation Plan

CFSA will develop and promulgate performance-based contracts whereby contract agencies are required to supervise placements at MFO standards. Performance-based contracts to include strategies to leverage performance when contract agencies are not meeting visitation standards (Implementation Plan, Section IX, p 44).

b. Performance Benchmarks

By September 30, 2003, contracts for family and group care will include performance measures, which will assist in placement stability, will focus on strengthening capacity to support children in family settings and will be clear with respect to CFSA expectations regarding contractor responsibilities to children and families.

c. Findings

CFSA has established in its new Requests for Proposals performance-based requirements for visitation. For a fuller discussion, please see Section XII on contract reform. Additionally, the Agency is updating its current contracts as they are renewed to reflect and incorporate MFO standards for visitation.

B. Outcomes

1. Monthly Visits to Children in Foster Care

a. <u>Requirements</u>

<u>LaShawn A. v. Williams</u> requires that the child's foster care worker shall visit each child placed in a foster family or facility operated by a private agency that provides placement services in the foster home or facility every other week (Modified Final Order, Section IX, A.c).

The Implementation Plan requires incremental progress toward this requirement, beginning with achieving compliance with monthly visits. Thus, CFSA or contract social workers with case management responsibility shall make monthly visits to children in out-of-home care (foster family homes, group homes, congregate care, independent living programs, etc.) (Implementation Plan, Section IX, 1.b).

b. Performance Benchmarks

By June 30, 2003, CFSA or contract social workers with case management responsibility shall make monthly visits to children in out-of-home care (foster family homes, group homes, congregate care, independent living programs, etc.) in 50% of cases (Implementation Plan, Section IX, 1.b).

In addition to requiring visitation to children in out-of-home care, the Implementation Plan also requires CFSA workers or a qualified worker from a service provider authorized by CFSA to visit families in which there has been substantiated abuse or neglect, with a determination that children can be maintained safely in the home with services (Implementation Plan, Section III, 3.). By June 30, 2003, it was expected that there would be visitation at least monthly in 30% of in-home cases.

c. Source of Data

Data for this measure were derived from a case record review of a random sample of all children in foster care as of July 31, 2003. Case readers specifically examined the pattern of visitation in the six-month period between January 31, 2002 and July 31, 2003 to determine the pattern of visiting. In an effort to assess current practice, the Monitor also looked at social worker visits to children in July 2003 only.

The Quality Service Review was also used to determine if workers are visiting children and families who are receiving in-home services and children in foster care. Thirty-eight cases were reviewed in the Quality Service Review – 32 out-of-home cases and 6 in-home cases. The sample of cases for the Quality Service Review were pulled randomly from the universe of open cases at the Agency, but because of the small number of cases pulled, the sample is not statistically significant.

d. Findings

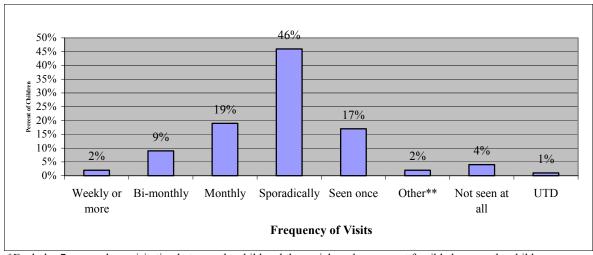
As shown in the Figure 18 below, during the six-month period of January 31, 2003 to July 31, 2003, of the 176 applicable children, 51 children (30%) were seen monthly or more based on the case record review of documentation in FACES. When children were seen monthly or more, only 65% of the 51 children were seen in the foster home as required by the MFO. Eighty-one children (46%) were visited by their social worker sporadically. Thirty children (17%) were seen only once. Four children (2%) were rated as "other" because the social worker only saw the child in court. Seven children (4%) were not seen at all and in three cases (2%) the record reviewers were not able to determine whether or not the child was visited by the social worker because the documentation was not sufficient.

In reviewing visits in July 2003 only, the Monitor found that 94 children (54%) of the 173 applicable children had received at least one visit from their social worker. Seventy-six children (44%) received no visit during July. One child was seen in court only (1%) and the reviewers were unable to determine the frequency of visits for two children (1%) because the documentation was not sufficient (see Figure 19).

CFSA administrative data indicate that 42% of children in out-of-home care received a monthly visit in July 2003. CFSA reports they have made changes to FACES and instituted a worker education program in December and January to be able to more accurately capture visits to children in foster care.

In contrast to the case record data, during the Quality Service Review reviewers found social worker visitation to children to be a strength in 82% of cases and visitation in general to be a strength in 56% of cases (see Figure 20). These findings suggest that workers are visiting children and parents more often than the documentation in FACES indicates. While this finding is not statistically representative of the entire universe of cases at CFSA, it was encouraging to find during the Quality Service Review that workers were regularly visiting in the majority of cases. The Agency must focus their efforts to ensure that all visits are documented.

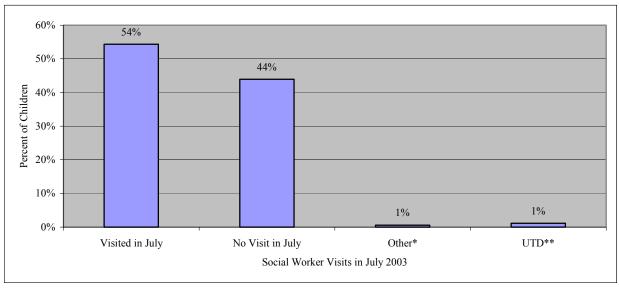
Figure 18: Social Worker Visitation with Children in Foster Care During the Six Months Between January 31, 2003 and July 31, 2003 (N=176)



^{*}Excludes 7 cases where visitation between the child and the social worker was not feasible because the child was placed outside the DC metropolitan area.

Source: CSSP case record review of all children in foster care in July 2003.

Figure 19: Social Worker Visits to Children in Foster Care in July 2003 (n=173)



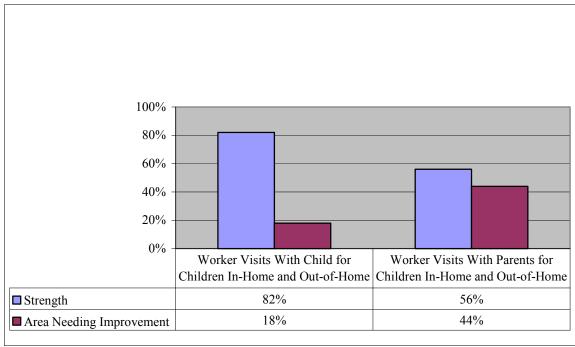
Source: CSSP case record review of children in foster care – July 2003 visits.

^{** &}quot;Other" cases refer to visits that occurred only in Court. In the UTD cases, the documentation was not sufficient for the reviewers to discern visitation or the frequency of visitation.

^{*}Excludes 10 cases where visitation between the child and the social worker was not feasible because the child was placed outside the DC metropolitan area.

^{**}UTD includes 2 cases where the documentation was insufficient to determine visitation.

Figure 20: Worker Visits with Children and Families for In-Home and Out-of-Home Cases as Determined by the Quality Services Review



Source: CSSP Quality Service Review conducted September and October 2003.

VII. CASE REVIEW SYSTEM

A. <u>Key Implementation Strategies</u>

1. Redesign of Administrative Review Process

a. <u>Requirements</u>

The Implementation Plan requires CFSA to redesign the administrative review process to improve, among other things, notification and attendance of relevant parties and to provide for a comprehensive review of case progress, permanency goals and adequacy of services. CFSA's redesign will include a strategy to phase-in implementation of the new administrative review process. This redesign will include:

- Development of new policies and procedures;
- Development of capacity to convene early case planning conferences for children entering foster care;
- Development of a new assessment tool that allows for comprehensive case reviews prior to holding an administrative case review;
- Adequate staff and supervision to conduct administrative case reviews;
- Restructuring of the notification and scheduling procedure to provide timely notification and maximize family and foster parent participation;
- Procedures to ensure that review recommendations are reflected in case plans;
- Processes to provide timely feedback to workers and supervisors;
- Accountability mechanisms, which (1) require and enforce social worker participation in the review process and (2) require the information system to "flag" cases overdue for administrative reviews

(Implementation Plan, Section X, 1).

b. Performance Benchmarks

By September 30, 2003, interim benchmarks for phase-in of the redesigned administrative review process will be established by CFSA in consultation with the Monitor and incorporated into the Implementation Plan (Implementation Plan, Section X. 1)

c. Findings

CFSA has developed policies and procedures for the new administrative review process. The Monitor reviewed and commented on these draft policies in July and the Agency generally made the recommended revisions. The current policy was last revised by the Agency on September 26, 2003. The policy outlines the restructuring of the administrative review process including a pre-review process, scheduling procedures, timely notification of all parties, increased participation of stakeholders, feedback to participants and accountability mechanisms.

Beginning in July, FACES began automatically generating notification letters to external stakeholders and a monthly review schedule for the Agency staff. Foster parent advocates report that foster parents are now receiving timely notification of administrative reviews.

Further, the Agency developed a comprehensive tool in November 2002 that is used by the quality assurance staff pre-review to assess all aspects of the case information prior to the administrative review.

The interim benchmarks for continued improvement in this area that were developed in consultation with the Monitor include:

- Completion of the pre-administrative review tool on all cases scheduled for an administrative review will be phased in completely by April 30, 2004.
- An evaluation of the new scheduling and notification system is underway and will be reassessed in June 2004.
- Effective July 17, 2003, the new summary screens in FACES were on-line for use of the administrative review specialists. By September 30, 2004, all summaries will be completed in FACES within a two-week calendar time frame.
- Assessment of the administrative review process will be made in connection with the facilitated family team meetings, 45-day conferences and other family group decision making processes. Relevant aspects of these processes will be integrated and linked. The assessment and recommendations for how to integrate administrative reviews into the new facilitated family team meetings will be completed by March 2004.

2. Phased Implementation of MFO Special Reviews

a. Requirements

The <u>LaShawn</u> Modified Final Order requires special reviews of children's cases under the following circumstances. Categories of special reviews include:

- cases with four or more reports of neglect or abuse concerning a single child, a single perpetrator or a single family;
- cases in which a child has been placed in four different placements, excluding a return home
- cases in which a child has a plan of return home for more than 24 months

- cases in which a child has had a permanency goal of adoption for more than one year and has not been placed in an adoptive home; and
- children who have been returned home and reentered care more than twice and have a plan of return home.

The Implementation Plan required a phased implementation of these reviews subject to the approval of the Court monitor.

b. Performance Benchmarks

By September 30, 2003, CFSA will develop procedures to provide for the phased implementation of the special reviews set forth in the MFO, subject to the approval of the Court Monitor (Implementation Plan, Section X, 3).

c. Findings

CFSA has developed a monthly management report, which is provided to the Monitor, to track and monitor the children in each of the five special review categories identified in the <u>LaShawn</u> Modified Final Order. This report is expected to be provided to the Monitor by no later than March 2004.

Beginning in March 2004, the Agency plans to incorporate the review of these special cases into the 45-day reviews that are held on all new cases entering the Agency, the administrative review and the pre-administrative review process.

The phase-in process for ensuring all children in special categories are reviewed in a timely manner proposed by CFSA is detailed below and was provided to the Monitor by September 30, 2003. CFSA also indicated that it intended to reassess the proposed phase-in as part of the design of its overall Quality Assurance Plan, due December 31, 2003. The Monitor was unable to approve this phase-in plan without overall the Quality Assurance Plan and without additional data on the numbers of children currently in each category.

The plan that CFSA proposed is as follows:

Cases with four or more reports of neglect or abuse: Phase-in of reviews to beginning June 30, 2004 for those cases that are currently open at the Agency. Cases that are not currently open at the Agency but a new report(s) is received, thereby resulting in four or more reports, will be addressed beginning April 2004 through the use of the 45-day conference

Cases in which a child has been placed in four different placements: Cases that have three or more placements within one year are currently being reviewed in the multiple placement staffing. Phase-in reviews to begin September 30, 2004 for those cases in which the placements occurred over a period of time that is greater than the past year.

Cases in which a child has a plan of return home for more than 24 months: CFSA indicated that many of these cases are currently being reviewed through the administrative review process. For those special category children who have not had an administrative review or this review did not resolve the issues, a special category review will be phased-in beginning June 20, 2004.

Cases in which a child has a permanency goal of adoption for more than one year and has not been placed in an adoptive home: Phase-in of reviews to begin March 31, 2004

Cases of children who have returned home and re-entered care more than twice and have a plan of return home: Phase-in reviews to begin by December 31, 2003.

The Monitor will review this plan once data are received, consult with CFSA and make a decision by no later than March 31, 2004.

B. Outcomes

1. Administrative Reviews of Case Progress

a. <u>Requirements</u>

<u>LaShawn A v. Williams</u> requires that within 180 days of a child's entry into the Department's physical or legal custody and every 180 days thereafter, the Department shall conduct an administrative review of the child's care (Modified Final Order, Section X, B, 1.c and Implementation Plan, Section X, 3).

b. <u>Performance Benchmarks</u>

By June 30, 2003, 70% of foster care cases will have had an administrative case review within 180 days of entering care and every 180 days thereafter (Implementation Plan, Section X, 3).

c. Source of Data

Data for this measure were derived from a case record review of a random sample of all children in foster care as of July 31, 2003. Information was collected from FACES case records. Valid cases were children in care for more than six months. Children were judged to be in compliance if they had a review within the six-month period prior to July 31, 2003.

d. Findings

Of the 170 cases reviewed, 104 children (61%) had a current administrative review as of July 31, 2003. (CFSA administrative data indicate 64% of cases had a current administrative review as of July 31, 2003.) The remaining 66 cases in the case record review included 17 cases (10%) in which an administrative review was held but it occurred more than six months ago; and in 49 cases (29%) there was no documentation in FACES that the administrative review had been held. The performance benchmark of current administrative review in 70% of cases was not met (see Figure 21).

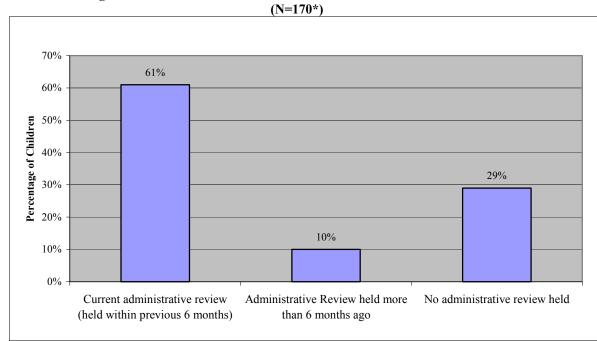


Figure 21: Children in Foster Care with Current Administrative Reviews (N=170*)

*Excludes 13 children who have been in foster care less than 6 months.

Source: CSSP record review of children in foster care six months or more as of July 31, 2003

VIII. CASELOADS

A. <u>Key Implementation Strategies</u>

1. Developing and Implementing Social Worker Recruitment and Retention Plan

a. Requirements and Performance Benchmark

By June 30, 2003, and annually thereafter, CFSA will develop and implement a written recruitment and retention plan that identifies CFSA strategies, time frames and recruitment resources allocated to ensure there are sufficient professional and paraprofessional staff to achieve compliance with the caseload ratios specified in the MFO (Implementation Plan, XI, 3).

By September 30, 2003 and thereafter, CFSA, in consultation with national experts, will implement strategies to recruit and retain qualified social workers (Implementation Plan, XI, 2).

b. Findings

The Agency submitted a comprehensive recruitment and retention work plan to the Monitor by June 30, 2003, which was developed in consultation with its National Advisory Committee. Goals of the plan as described by CFSA are detailed below. Although not outlined here, each goal includes specific strategies and time frames to complete the strategies as well as specific resources dedicated to achieving the goals.

Recruitment

- Successfully recruit and retain sufficient number of workers to meet target of 300 social workers and 60 supervisors by the end of FY03 and 350 social workers and 70 supervisors by October 1, 2004.
- Develop an effective information tracking system that will provide essential management information specific to the multiple data collection needs of the Agency's recruitment and retention efforts.
- o Increase the current number of social workers who are bilingual and/or bicultural by 100% effective September 30, 2003, moving from 5 to 10 social workers.

Retention

 Create a caring, nurturing, professionally stimulating work environment that attracts and retains social workers who have the values and skills needed to achieve the Agency's mission. Assess strategies, including use of Title IV-E funding with the
ultimate objective of clearly establishing formal guidelines with local
universities to create opportunities for the BSWs and the MSWs
through scholarships, stipends and other relevant financial support
with a conditional payback clause to the Agency.

The Agency has begun implementing the strategies contained in the recruitment and retention work plan. As a result of the conscientious implementation of this plan, the Agency met the staffing requirements for September 30, 2003 as outlined in Section B below.

2. Caseload and Staffing Projections for the Future

a. Requirements

CFSA will review and compare total projected caseloads against MFO caseload standards to project the number of licensed social workers and supervisory social workers, case aides and support staff needed to meet the caseload ratios established in the MFO. (Implementation Plan, Section XI, 4).

b. Performance Benchmarks

By June 2003, CFSA will review and compare total projected caseloads against MFO caseload standards to project the number of licensed social workers and supervisory social workers, case aides and support staff needed to meet the caseload ratios established in the MFO. The staffing projection will also identify the staffing levels of other key functional areas including: a) training, b) resource development (including licensing and monitoring), c) contracting, d) quality assurance, and e) OCC legal staff needed to carry out legal representation functions for the Agency. Based on these projections, CFSA, in consultation with the Monitor, will develop annual hiring targets with six month benchmarks. (Implementation Plan, XI, 4).

For FY 2003, CFSA will increase the number of social work staff to 300 by September 30, 2003, and increase supervisory staff for these workers to 60 by September 30, 2003 (Implementation Plan, XI, 4.a).

c. Findings

As of September 30, 2003, CFSA employed 63 supervisors, 324 social workers and 81 social services assistants. Table 12 describes current social work staffing at CFSA as of October 17, 2003.

Table 12: Numbers of CFSA Staff in Case Practice Positions as of October 17, 2003

	Number of Social Workers	
Supervisory Social Worker	63	
Social Worker (MSW)	275 (16 trainees)	
Social Work Associates (BSW)	26 (2 trainees)	
Student Trainees (Social Workers)	13	
Contract Social Worker	10	
Social Service Assistant	81	

Source: CFSA administrative data.

As the number of case carrying workers has increased, the caseloads of workers have decreased. For the first time in the history of the Court's oversight of CFSA, average caseloads have been reduced to less than 20 cases per worker. On October 17, 2003, the average caseload for social workers with on-going case management responsibility was 19 cases with no worker carrying over 29 cases.

CFSA completed a review of the current case carrying staffing levels and developed staffing projections through December 2004 based on high and low assumptions about caseloads. This information was discussed with the Monitor and plaintiffs in the fall of 2003. Additional information regarding the quality assurance and training unit staffing levels is to be submitted to the Monitor as part of the December 2003 key implementation strategies. The Monitor will continue discussions with CFSA about hiring targets and reach agreement on benchmarks for June, September and December 2004 within the next month so as to inform this year's recruitment activities.

3. Retaining Qualified Social Workers

a. Requirements

Beginning March 31, 2003, CFSA will routinely conduct exit interviews for social work staff leaving the Agency and analyze the information provided to inform recruitment and retention practices (Implementation Plan, XI, 6).

b. Findings

The Agency conducted 171 exit interviews during FY03. Workers separating from the Agency were asked to discuss the reasons they were leaving. The Agency plans to utilize the data obtained during exit interviews in the development of a corrective action plan. The following trends have been identified as the top five reasons workers leave CFSA:

- 1. Licensure requirements (CFSA requires all case carrying social work staff to hold a current and valid DC license. It is now terminating recently hired workers who are unable to obtain the license during the first 90 days of employment. Trainees who are not yet licensed receive two hours a week of licensing examination preparation from CFSA. Trainees hired without a license must pass the licensing examination within 90 days of being hired.)
- 2. Personal or family issues
- 3. Poor supervision
- 4. Lack of support
- 5. Relocation and Lack of Infrastructure are "tied" as the fifth reason workers leave CFSA. (CFSA defines infrastructure as established and consistent policies, procedures and guidelines.)

It is important to note bad experiences in Court, which used to be identified as a top reason for worker exit, is no longer on the list of key reasons workers leave. This suggests that the reforms at the Family Court and the improved collaboration between the Court and CFSA are making a difference.

B. Outcomes

1. Caseload of Workers: Investigations, Case Carrying, Adoption and Supervisors

a. <u>Requirements</u>

The <u>LaShawn</u> Modified Final Order, Section XI, A.1. and the Implementation Plan, Section XI, 1 require the following caseloads:

- Investigations: no more than 12 cases per worker
- In-home services: no more than 17 families per worker
- Foster care: no more than 12 special needs children or 20 children without special needs per worker
- Adoption: no more than 12 children or 15 independent adoption children per worker
- Home studies: no more then 30 cases per worker

b. <u>Performance Benchmarks</u>

The Implementation Plan, as indicated in Table 13, sets the following caseload benchmarks for September 30, 2003:

Table 13: CFSA Caseload Benchmarks
for September 30, 2003

	September 30 Caseload Benchmark		
Investigations	No more than 16 investigations per worker		
Case Carrying Social Workers	No more than 27 cases per worker ("Families" in in-home services cases and "children" in foster care cases)		
Adoptions	No more than 27 children per worker		
Supervisors	50% of supervisors will responsible for no more than six workers, including case aides, or five case workers		

c. Source of Data

The Agency provided administrative data on caseloads for CFSA intake and investigations, case carrying social workers, adoption workers and supervisors. The Monitor has not reviewed caseloads of workers in private agencies at this time.

d. Findings

Table 14 illustrates the caseloads for CFSA case carrying workers, adoption workers and supervisors as of October 17, 2003 and caseload data for investigations workers as of November 27, 2003. In October 2003, there were 21 case carrying workers out of a total of 203 workers whose caseloads did not meet the performance benchmark of having no more than 27 cases. However, the Agency has made significant progress in bringing down caseloads to the current levels. The current case load levels in these areas are in stark comparison to October 2002 when 25 workers carried between 30 and 39 cases, 26 workers carried between 40 and 49 cases and 13 workers carried 50 or more cases.

Caseloads in investigations have continued to be reduced as well but remain higher than the Monitor had anticipated for the June 30 benchmark. While the average number of cases in investigations is 12 cases, the distribution of cases among the 56 investigations workers is quite large with 12 workers carrying less than 8 cases and 15 workers carrying 17 or more cases. One worker carried as many as 39 cases during the week of November 27, 2003. Given the growing backlog in investigations, additional staffing strategies may be needed to ensure that workers in the Investigations Unit are able to do their jobs in a competent and timely manner.

Table 14: Caseloads for CFSA Social Workers as of October 17, 2003 and November 27, 2003

Type of Work	MFO Standard	9/30/03 Benchmark	Average Caseload on 10/17/03*	# of Workers with Caseload Exceeding 9/30/03 Benchmark
Investigations	No more than 12 investigations	No more than 16 investigations	12** (range is from 1 – 39 cases)	15
Case Carrying Workers (In-Home Services and Foster Care)	Foster Care No more than 12 children with special needs or 20 for all other children	No more than 27 cases	19	17 (no worker carrying over 29 cases)
Adoptions	No more than 12 children or 15 children involving independent adoption	No more than 27 children	20 cases	(no worker carrying over 29 cases)
Supervisors	No more than six workers, including case aides, or five case workers	50% of supervisors will be responsible for no more than six workers, including case aides, or five case workers	3 supervisors have 6 workers each; 1 unit without a supervisor has 6 workers although one worker is not carrying cases.	4 of 37 supervisory units (11%) exceed the standards***

^{*}Data for investigations workers are from the week ending November 27, 2003.

Source: CFSA administrative data from October 17, 2003 for case carrying workers, adoption workers and supervisors.

^{**}The average number of cases carried in the Investigations Unit is not a useful measure as the spread of cases is quite large with 12 workers carrying fewer than 8 cases and 15 workers carrying more than 16 cases. Two workers were carrying 30 or more cases.

^{***}Six training units are not included in this review.

IX. TRAINING

A. Key Implementation Strategies

1. Development of Training Advisory Committee

a. Requirements

By September 30, 2003, CFSA will develop a training advisory committee or alternative formal assessment process to provide on-going guidance and feedback regarding training design and activities (Implementation Plan, Section XIV, 1).

b. <u>Findings</u>

The Agency has consulted extensively with its National Advisory Committee on its assessment of and reforms to the way training is provided at CFSA. A determination has been made that a separate training advisory committee is also needed to strengthen the Agency's training program and staff development. The Agency has identified both internal and external individuals for inclusion on the committee. It is anticipated that this group will be convened by the end of January 2004 and meet the last Tuesday of every other month.

2. Redesign of Training Academy

a. <u>Requirements</u>

CFSA will redesign its training academy to provide or arrange for a system of training and professional development activities that are competency-based for each level of staff (Implementation Plan, XIV, 3.a).

b. Performance Benchmarks

By September 30, 2003, CFSA will develop an annual training plan that identifies the training to be provided to social workers, supervisors, managers, private providers, foster and adoptive parents, and attorneys as well as the training that will be offered for the judicial system (Implementation Plan, XIV, 3.a).

c. Findings

A training plan for FY04 has been developed by the Agency. This ambitious, comprehensive and competency-based plan is developed around three major goals and five main training areas:

The goals are that: (1) the training plan serve as a catalyst for practice reform; (2) training is used to create a learning environment; and (3) training includes reaching out to community partners.

For FY04, the Plan identifies five key areas around which training will be developed and delivered, including:

- o Family engagement
- Assessment
- Case planning
- Achieving permanency
- o Communicating change and outcomes

This training plan effectively begins to align the training activities of the Agency with its values, philosophies and outcomes. There is a heavy emphasis on re-training supervisors and administrators so that all management staff can clearly communicate and manage to the desired results. A training curriculum, which will include the "core competencies," is still in development at CFSA and will be provided to the Monitor.

A new pre-service training plan has been developed and implemented by CFSA. The plan includes using training units to ensure new workers move towards mastery of the needed competencies before carrying an entire caseload. The pre-service training integrates classroom training and on-the-job training in training units over an 8 ½ week period. The pre-service training curriculum includes four modules – child protective services, casework process and case planning, effects of abuse and neglect, and separation and placement. A single start date for new employees is available every month so that preservice training can begin simultaneously for all social workers hired during a one-month period.

The Agency is reviewing its current staffing levels in the Office of Training Services, which have been preliminarily discussed with the Monitor. CFSA will provide an update to the Monitor in January. It is too soon for the Monitor to fully assess the adequacy of staffing levels in the Office of Training Services.

During the next year, the Monitor plans to complete an in-depth assessment of the new training being provided and the use of training units by the Agency.

3. Training Units

a. Requirements

Beginning December 30, 2002, and thereafter, CFSA will maintain training units as a mechanism for orienting and integrating new staff into the Agency (Implementation Plan, Section XIV, 6).

b. Findings

As described above, the Agency is actively using training units as a mechanism for orienting and integrating new staff into the Agency. There are currently six training units - 3 units with in-home cases and 3 units with reunification cases. Each unit is comprised of a training supervisor, a lead worker and 7 to 8 trainees. New workers are assigned to

training units and receive both classroom and on-the-job training during their first 8 ½ weeks of employment at CFSA.

Trainees initially receive a small number of cases in the low to moderate risk level. The trainees are assessed over time by the supervisor for their readiness to increase their caseload. This process continues throughout the trainees' time in the training unit until each trainee receives a full caseload and can be transitioned out of the training unit.

B. Outcomes

1. 80 Hours of Pre-Service Training for New Workers

a. Requirements

<u>LaShawn A. v. Williams</u> requires that every newly hired CFSA social worker shall receive a minimum of 80 hours of instructional training and a minimum of 80 hours of field training. The Implementation Plan requires new workers to receive the required 80 hours of pre-service training through a combination of classroom and on-the-job training in assigned training units (Implementation Plan, XIV, 1).

b. Performance Benchmarks

By September 30, 2003, 90% of new workers will receive the required 80 hours of preservice training through a combination of classroom and on-the-job training in assigned training units (Implementation Plan, XIV, 1).

c. Source of Data

Data on CFSA training are derived from a review of administrative data provided by CFSA for workers hired between March 1, 2003 and June 30, 2003. A total of 51 social workers were hired between the months of March 2003 and June 2003. Of the 51 social workers, 5 were not applicable for this measure as they separated from the Agency or a consortium agency within the first month and did not complete service training. Forty-six (46) new workers were applicable for this measure.

d. Findings

Of the 46 new workers, 44 (96%) received the required 80 hours of pre-service training as of August 06, 2003. Of the remaining two workers, one is scheduled to begin training in January 2004 and one has received 12 hours of training to date and remains enrolled as a trainee. This exceeds the established performance benchmark.

2. 40 Hours of Pre-Service Training for New Supervisors

a. Requirements

The <u>LaShawn</u> Modified Final Order and Implementation Plan require that new supervisors receive a minimum of 40 hours of pre-training on supervision of child welfare workers within three months of assuming supervisory responsibility (Implementation Plan, XIV, 6).

b. Performance Benchmarks

By September 30, 2003, 50% of new supervisors will receive a minimum of 40 hours of pre-training on supervision of child welfare workers. This training will begin within three months of a person assuming supervisory responsibility and is completed over a 5-month period (Implementation Plan, XIV, 6).

c. <u>Source of</u> Data

Data for CFSA training were derived from a review of administrative data provided by CFSA on the training experience of new supervisors for the period between March 1, 2003 and June 30, 2003. Five CFSA supervisors of case carrying social workers were hired between the months of March 2003 and June 2003.

d. Findings

Five (100%) new supervisors each received 80 hours of pre-service training. This exceeds the established performance benchmark.

X. RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

A. <u>Key Implementation Strategies</u>

1. Implementation and Enforcement of Placement Standards

a. Requirements

By June 30, 2003, CFSA will identify the responsibilities and functions, including the management and supervisory structure needed to carry out the implementation and enforcement of licensing and monitoring standards for foster family homes, group homes and independent living facilities (Implementation Plan, Section XV, 4.a).

b. <u>Performance Benchmarks</u>

By September 30, 2003, CFSA will review the qualifications and competencies required for licensing/monitoring staff. Modification of job descriptions, qualifications and training of existing staff will be completed as appropriate (Implementation Plan, Section XV, b).

By September 30, 2003, CFSA will provide sufficient Licensing & Monitoring staff and make best efforts to hire the 20 new positions (unless CFSA can demonstrate that this function can be fulfilled with fewer staff); subsequent staffing, including additional staff if necessary, shall be included in the annual staffing projections identified in Section XII, Strategy 4 (Implementation Plan, Section XV, 4.c).

c. Findings

The management and supervisory structure for Licensing and Monitoring was developed as part of large scale Agency reorganization in April 2003. The administration is staffed by the deputy director for licensing and monitoring, a program administrator, and three monitoring divisions – youth residential facilities, child placement, and licensing divisions

An initial review was completed of the qualifications and competencies required for staff. Position descriptions for both licensing staff and monitoring staff were updated in preparation for new positions that were to be filled by September 30, 2003. In addition to updating the position descriptions, the Agency planned to conduct focus groups with CFSA and private agency managers to identify the competencies needed for these positions.

The allocated staffing positions and the current (as of 10/10/03) staffing for the three divisions is as follows:

- Youth Residential Facilities Monitoring Division
 Staffing allocation: 1 manager, 2 supervisors, 10 monitors, 3 clerical assistants, and 1 sanitarian
 Current staff: 1 manager, 1 supervisor, 9 monitors, and 1 clerical assistant
- Child Placement Agency Monitoring Division

 Staffing allocation: 1 manager, 2 supervisors, 12 monitors, 1 social services assistant, 1 clerical assistant

 Current staff: 1 manager, 2 supervisors, 11 monitors, 1 social services assistant, and 1 clerical assistant
- Licensing Division

 Staffing allocation: 1 manager, 3 supervisors, 12 resource development specialists, 2 clerical assistants, and 2 sanitarians

 Current staff: 4 resource development specialists

As of October 2003, there remained key staffing vacancies in the licensing division. CFSA reported in early February 2004 that the Office of Licensing and Monitoring has now staffed two new teams of resource development specialists who are assigned to the licensing effort. One team consists of three licensors and a licensing supervisor who are responsible for the licensing of foster homes. The facility licensing team consists of four licensors, a sanitarian and a licensing supervisor. CFSA is actively recruiting a program manager to oversee the two licensing programs.

2. Licensure of Kinship Foster Homes

a. Requirement and Performance Benchmark

CFSA will develop and implement policies on the licensure of kinship foster homes (Implementation Plan, Section XV, 5).

By September 30, 2003, CFSA will develop and implement policies on the licensure of kinship foster homes (Implementation Plan, Section XV, 5).

b. Findings

The Agency has developed policies regarding the provisional approval of kinship foster homes. This would allow the Agency to approve, on an emergency basis, a kinship home for a temporary period of 120 days thereby allowing children who have been removed from home to be placed with kin rather than in a traditional foster home. The kinship home would have to successfully complete a preliminary assessment prior to approval. The Monitor has reviewed the policy and provided comments to the Agency. This policy is expected to be published in the DC Register for proposed rulemaking in February 2004. CFSA and the Office of Corporation Counsel are currently being trained on the new policy.

Additionally, the Agency has formed a workgroup to revise the overall policy on kinship licensure. This workgroup has reviewed the current policy and made recommendations regarding revisions. A full draft of this policy was provided to the Monitor on January 15, 2004.

3. Access to Criminal Records and FBI Clearance Information

a. Requirements and Performance Benchmark

By September 30, 2003, the District will make all reasonable efforts to provide timely access to criminal records and FBI clearance information necessary for approval of emergency placements for children with relatives and approval of foster and adoptive families (Implementation Plan, Section XV, 6).

b. Findings

The Agency reports they are working with the Metropolitan Police Department and the FBI to gain direct access to the Interstate Identification Index System (also known as NCIC) information. Direct access is not yet available but the Agency is in the final stages of completing the technological infrastructure needed – obtaining a new data link for MPD, obtaining the needed software, and obtaining final approval from MPD. While access to NCIC does not provide a full FBI clearance, with proposed rule changes to the emergency kinship licensure process, it would allow CFSA to clear kin for placement under some circumstances while they are waiting. In September 2003, key staff completed the necessary training. The Agency is optimistic that the needed access will be available. The Monitor believes a clear time frame and commitment by MPD is needed to overcome these barriers.

XI. CONTRACT REVIEW

- A. Key Implementation Strategies
- 1. Contract Office and Job Description Restructuring

a. <u>Requirements</u>

CFSA will complete restructuring of its Contracts Office and review and modify relevant job descriptions (Implementation Plan, XVI, 1).

b. Performance Benchmarks

By June 30, 2003, based on the review of CFSA's contract operations and internal expertise, CFSA will complete restructuring of its Contracts Office and review and modify relevant job descriptions (Implementation Plan, Section XVI, 1).

c. <u>Findings</u>

The Contracts and Procurement Administration was restructured during a large scale Agency restructuring in April 2003. All of the job descriptions were reviewed and changed as needed. A contracts administrator was hired but has since separated from the Agency leaving the administrator position vacant along with one vacant compliance analyst position. ¹² Staffing for the contracts administration includes:

- a. 1 administrator
- b. 1 manager
- c. 1 contract price/cost analyst
- d. 1 compliance analyst
- e. 6 contract specialists
- f. 2 assistants

The Monitor has not formally assessed whether this staffing pattern is adequate. There remain problems in the efficient and effective operations of the contract office. A highly qualified permanent contract administrator is essential, followed by a quick internal assessment of the skills of current staff, the effective management of contract functions and the possible need for additional staff and/or technology. Under the Implementation Plan, the Agency must obtain an independent assessment of its contracting function by March 31, 2004 and the assessment must be completed by June 30, 2004.

¹² The Contracts Administrator position was filled in January 2004.

2. RFP and Award Contracts

a. <u>Requirements</u>

CFSA will issue new RFPs and award contracts for congregate care, family care, and community based care/preventive services (Implementation Plan, Section XVI, 6).

b. Performance Benchmarks

By September 30, 2003, CFSA will issue new RFPs and the first round of award contracts for congregate care, family care, and community based care/preventive services (Implementation Plan, XVI, 6).

c. Findings

The Agency has undergone an arduous process to completely reorganize the RFP process to include multiple stakeholders in the development of the RFPs. This has also included raising the standards incorporated in its requests and moving toward performance-based contracting. Importantly, the Agency is using the RFP process to drive the kind of macro system reforms that are needed. The Agency should be commended for this effort, which was far more extensive than originally anticipated. While the contracts have not yet been awarded, the Monitor is satisfied that this process is on track.

CFSA issued the RFP for congregate care on July 28, 2003 and received all eligible proposals on September 17, 2003. The Agency expects to make selection recommendations on January 16, 2004. Contracts under \$1 million will be awarded on February 1, 2004 and all other contracts will be awarded on March 1, 2004 after District of Columbia City Council review. CFSA issued the RFP for family based care on November 24, 2003 and received all eligible proposals on January 8, 2004. The Agency expects to make selection recommendations on April 24, 2004. Contracts will be awarded on May 28, 2004.

After receiving comments on its Request for Information (released January, 2003), CFSA concluded that more work needed to be done to tailor its approach to community-based care. As a result, CFSA will continue to move towards its generally articulated plan in the RFI and credential or pre-qualify providers for certain services while determining how best to procure the remaining needed services. CFSA will engage in an inclusive planning process with the Collaboratives and community partners to better develop and articulate its community services strategy. The first meeting is scheduled for early February 2004. Additionally, CFSA has included on its National Advisory Board individuals with community expertise. CFSA expects its work on this initiative to be completed in FY04.

B. Outcomes

1. Performance-based Contracting System

a. <u>Requirements</u>

<u>LaShawn A. v. Williams</u> requires that all services within the scope of this Order for which the Department contracts with private providers or agencies shall be subject to a contract screening and review process within the department. Furthermore, the Department shall develop policies and procedures for specific contract performance and a contract performance review process for each category of service (Modified Final Order, XVI, A, B).

By September 30, 2005 CFSA will fully implement a performance-based contracting system with capacity to monitor performance on outcomes and make decisions based on achievement of outcomes (Implementation Plan, XVI, 2).

b Performance Benchmarks

By September 30, 2003, contracts for family and group care will include performance measures, which will assist in placement stability, will focus on strengthening capacity to support children in family settings and will be clear with respect to CFSA expectations regarding contractor responsibility to children and families (Implementation Plan, XVI, 2.a).

c. <u>Findings</u>

See discussion above on RFPs.

XII. INFORMATION SYSTEMS

1. Management Information Reports

a. Requirements and Performance Benchmarks

By September 30, 2003, CFSA with the approval of the Court Monitor will identify the reports to be produced in FACES and the frequency of reports, which will assist the Agency in meeting goals of safety, permanence, well-being, and monitoring compliance with the MFO and Implementation Plan (Implementation Plan, Section XVII, 1).

b. Findings

The Agency has made great progress in developing a core set of management and monitoring reports that are produced by FACES on a monthly basis. The Monitor has met with the Agency to discuss the development of the reports and provided feedback regarding revisions to both the new reports and reports the Agency has historically produced. The Agency has been responsive and developed or clarified reports that will assist them in meeting the goals of safety, permanency and well-being. Additionally, there is evidence that managers across the Agency are beginning to use the reports to track changes and make decisions about the direction of reforms. The reports to be produced include:

- Intake and Investigations
 - Hotline calls
 - o Investigations by type and time before initiation
 - o Investigations completed by disposition
 - o Summary of investigations completed
 - o Open investigations by type and days open

Caseload

- o CFSA caseload count by type
- o Demographics of children in foster care

Permanency

- o Entries, exits and permanency goals for children in foster care
- CFSA finalized adoptions
- o Administrative review status for children in foster care
- Case plans for CFSA children in foster care
- Case plans for family cases
- o CFSA parent-child visits to foster children with a goal of reunification
- o Placement type for CFSA children with a goal of adoption

• Child Safety and Well-being

- Visits to families
- Visits to children in foster care
- o CFSA children with three or more placements in the previous 12 months

- CFSA children 21 and younger placed in congregate care and group homes
- o CFSA children placed in residential facilities 100 miles or more away
- o CFSA children placed in residential facilities less than 100 miles away
- o CFSA disruption staffing
- o Children in abscondence
- o License status of foster homes with children placed by state

• Best Practice Reports

- o Sibling visits between children placed apart from their siblings
- o CFSA children placed with one or more siblings
- o Foster homes with more than three children placed
- o Group homes with more than three children placed

While much has been accomplished and the quality and use of data is dramatically improved since a year ago, there remain many challenges in ensuring timely and accurate data entry. These challenges include access problems for CFSA and private agencies, ongoing training of new and existing workers, and efforts to make CFSA data entry screens more user friendly. The Agency should be complimented, however, on its achievements in the past year and its ambitious plans for the current year.

XIII. FINANCIAL DEVELOPMENT

A. <u>Key Implementation Strategies</u>

1. Foster Parent Board Rate Adjustments

a. Requirements

By September 30, 2003, and annually thereafter, foster parent board rates shall be adjusted annually at the start of each fiscal (or calendar) year to ensure that they meet the USDA standard for raising a child in the urban south (Implementation Plan, Section XVIII, 2).

b. <u>Findings</u>

The Agency adjusted its foster parent board rates to meet the USDA standard for raising a child in the urban south. Due to an administrative oversight, however, the Agency did not realize that they had not adjusted the rates by September 30, 2003 until mid-November. CFSA contacted the Monitor once the oversight was discovered and in discussions with the Monitor, it was determined that the rates structure would take effect as of January 1, 2004. The new rates for foster parents are described in Table 15 below.

Table 15: Foster Parent Board Rates for 2004*					
	Yearly Payments				
Under 12	\$9,641.55				
12 and older	\$10,459.58				
	Level 1 Regular				
	Children Under 12	Children 12 and Older			
Daily	\$26.42	\$28.66			
30 day month	\$792.46	\$859.69			
31 day month	\$818.87	\$888.35			

^{*}Based on USDA standard for raising a child in the urban south for calendar year 2003.

XIV. SPECIAL CORRECTIVE ACTION

Much of the system change currently taking place at CFSA and discussed in this report is designed to ensure that children do not have experiences that need corrective action. Specific strategies to quickly identify children and circumstances that require corrective action and take steps to remediate the problem include the development of the new administrative review process previously described in Section X.A1. The Agency is also in the process of developing policies and child specific reviews that will be phased in beginning January 2004 for all children who are identified in a corrective action category. The description of the proposed phase-in process can be found in Section X.B1.

Appendix A

1. <u>Case Record Review Methodology</u>

The assessment of progress reflected in this report used several different methodologies: (1) case record reviews of statistically valid random samples of children and families in the child welfare system; (2) independent verification of CFSA administrative data; and (3) a qualitative review of case practice. This appendix describes the methodology used for the case record reviews.

Five different samples were selected randomly from the total universe of cases to allow sufficient numbers to achieve statistical validity of 95% confidence with a +/- 7% margin of error. These samples include the following: (1) Hotline calls accepted for investigation in July 2003; (2) all open investigations in July 2003; (3) all open cases (foster and in-home) as of July 2003; (4) children in foster care at anytime during July 2003; and (5) children newly placed in foster care or whose placement changed in July 2003. Trained case reviewers, selected and supervised by the Court Monitor (CSSP) reviewed over 800 case records between October and November 2003.

Once the sample size was established, cases were randomly selected from case listings provided by CFSA through electronic format. Based on our experience with other similar reviews, we chose more cases in each sample to enable replacement records to ensure the required sample size was achieved. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to randomly select the requisite number of cases from each of the appropriate case listings.

Table A-1 shows the universe of cases, the number of cases in each sample, the sample size needed to obtain a +/-7% statistical margin of error, and the number of valid cases reviewed for data analysis. In each sample, CSSP was able to achieve a sufficient number of valid cases to meet statistical validity tests.

Table A-1

1 abit A-1				
Universe and Sample Size for Case Record Review				
	I. Univ			
	e r s e	Number of Cases in Sample and Over Sample	Sample Size Needed for +/-7% Margin of Error	Number of Valid Cases Reviewed for Data Analysis
Hotline Calls Accepted for Investigation in July, 2003	393	143	130	130
All Open Investigations in July, 2003	572	160	145	145
All Open Cases as of July, 2003 (In-Home and Foster Care)	5093	204	185	185
Foster Care Cases as of July, 2003	3088	201	183	183
Children Placed in July, 2003	Unable to Determine*	N/A – Entire Universe Reviewed	N/A	61
A. All Foster Homes	1552	200	172	172
Total cases used for analysis				876

*CFSA provided 111 cases for the review of children placed or replaced in July 2003. Upon reviewing FACES records, the CSSP review determined that only 61 of these children were actually placed or replaced in July 2003. In the other cases, the case documentation in FACES suggested that these children had not experienced a placement move even though a placement change date had been entered. We cannot explain this discrepancy.

2. <u>Instrument Development</u>

A team of CSSP staff developed the data collection instruments – one for each type of case being reviewed. CFSA Administrators reviewed drafts of the instruments before their use in case reviews. CFSA FACES staff also reviewed the instruments and helped to identify where in FACES information could be found to answer questions.

3. Training and Quality Control

CSSP took several steps to ensure data quality during the record review phase. First, CSSP staff field-tested the instruments on sample cases. Second, case readers referred to documents prepared by CFSA FACES staff explaining where in FACES computerized data system information could be found. Third, training was conducted by FACES staff on how to navigate the system.

Finally, senior CSSP staff reviewed nearly every completed instrument to assure inter-rater reliability of answers and completeness and clarity and to assure that reviewer judgments were based on an understanding of policy and standards of professional practice.

4. <u>Data Entry and Analysis</u>

Data entry was done under contracts to CSSP by a reputable data entry company. This company performs a 100 percent verification of all data entry.

All data were analyzed by CSSP staff from distribution frequencies and cross tabulations and other reports generated using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).